





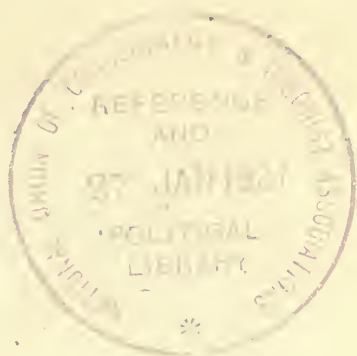
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EDMUND BURKE :  
APOSTLE OF JUSTICE AND LIBERTY







THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE

*After the Portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds*

EDMUND BURKE:

APOSTLE OF JUSTICE AND LIBERTY

BY

T. DUNDAS PILLANS

"Burke, Sir, is such a man that if you met him for the first time in the street, where you were stopped by a drove of oxen, and you and he stepped aside to take shelter but for five minutes, he'd talk to you in such a manner that when you parted you would say, 'This is an extraordinary man.'"

—DR. JOHNSON.

WATTS & CO.,  
17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

1905



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## CONTENTS

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	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	7
CHAPTER I.	
THE MAN, HIS GENIUS AND HIS GOSPEL . . . . .	11
CHAPTER II.	
THE REVOLT OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES . . . . .	31
CHAPTER III.	
INDIAN AFFAIRS . . . . .	69
CHAPTER IV.	
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION . . . . .	143
CHAPTER V.	
CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES . . . . .	175
CHAPTER VI.	
APHORISMS . . . . .	184
CHAPTER VII.	
CONCLUDING REMARKS . . . . .	195

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HARVARD



## PREFACE

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IN these pages we have placed before the reader passages from Burke's writings and speeches which appear to us to give a clear idea of his political and economic principles. We do not claim for this work that it is a complete presentation of the subject. Many such volumes might, indeed, be written without exhausting it. But if we have paved the way to a more extended study of Burke's works, our object will have been achieved. The present would seem to be a particularly fitting time for recalling public attention to the profound wisdom and consummate statesmanship unfolded in the works of this great man. The principles which he advocated, and which were afterwards embodied in the emancipating legislation of the Liberal party during two generations, have fallen into sad discredit and oblivion. We want a Burke to remind us that the truths he enunciated were "not for an age, but for all time"; and in an

era such as this, when the sound traditions of English constitutionalism have been abandoned for political trickery; when principle and consistency have been discarded in a heedless competition for the favour of the mob; and when the main object of politicians appears to be the capture of votes by the most reckless promises, we cannot do better than turn for guidance to the words of one who never faltered in his loyalty to Justice and Liberty, those fundamental principles of that true Liberalism of which he was the first and foremost exponent.

T. D. P.

*September, 1905.*





## CHAPTER I.

### THE MAN, HIS GENIUS AND HIS GOSPEL

THE career of Edmund Burke is one of the most signal examples in British history of the triumph of genius and character over apparently insurmountable obstacles.

The date of his birth has never been absolutely fixed, but it is now generally thought to have been January 29th, 1729 (new style). The son of an obscure Dublin attorney, he suffered a double disadvantage from his Irish parentage and the religion of his mother, who was a Roman Catholic. The battle of the Boyne and the siege of Derry were still comparatively fresh recollections in the English mind, and the penal laws against the adherents of the ancient religion disgraced the statute-book. It was a time, therefore, when racial and religious prejudice existed to a degree hardly conceivable to the present generation, and it requires little exercise of the imagination to realise the extent to which ✓

Burke's origin handicapped him in the race of life. It was an age, too, when social and political conditions were anything but conducive to the success of struggling genius. The country was still under the sway of that "Venetian Constitution" upon which Disraeli poured out the vials of his wrath. The "revolution families" viewed the higher dignities of state as their own exclusive perquisites, and guarded them with a vigilance worthy of the dragon of the Hesperides. A political career, to one not born in the purple, offered, therefore, no prospect of success; and it is significant of the genius and force of character with which the Dublin attorney's son was endowed that, in spite of these disadvantages, he climbed to the highest pinnacle of political distinction, became the guiding spirit of the proud oligarchy which ruled the nation, and finally acquired a reputation for profound statesmanship which, passing far beyond the confines of his own country, made him at last the oracle of both the Old and the New World.

It is not our purpose to give a detailed account of Burke's career, but some brief outline is necessary for a proper appreciation of his work and character.

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After taking his degree at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1748, he came to London, and entered as a student of the Middle Temple in 1750. He soon, however, forsook law for literature, and won distinction as an author by his "Vindication of Natural Society," a clever imitation of the style of Bolingbroke, and by an essay entitled "A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful." In 1761 he commenced his political career as secretary to "Single-Speech" Hamilton, Chief Secretary for Ireland, to whom he was introduced by Lord Charlemont. In 1765 Lord Rockingham, on becoming Prime Minister, appointed Burke his private secretary, and he entered the House of Commons as member for Wendover. In 1774 he was returned for Bristol, but lost the seat at the General Election of 1780, having given umbrage to his constituents by his advocacy of the removal of restrictions on Irish trade, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, and the repeal of the penal laws against Roman Catholics. He was thereupon elected for Malton in Yorkshire. In 1782 Lord Rockingham returned to power, and Burke was given the post of Paymaster of the Forces and a seat in the Privy Council. It is

significant of Whig exclusiveness that the brilliant genius who, as Disraeli says, had "restored the moral existence of the party," should have been relegated to a subordinate position, without even Cabinet rank, while the highest offices were distributed among aristocratic mediocrities. The sudden death of Rockingham brought his second ministry to an abrupt close, and deprived Burke of a generous friend. It was through Lord Rockingham's munificent appreciation of his services that Burke was enabled in 1769 to purchase the estate of Butler's Court, near Beaconsfield, at which he continued to reside until his death. After a brief interval Burke, in April, 1783, again became Paymaster of the Forces in the Duke of Portland's Coalition Ministry, which only lasted, however, until December of the same year, when the defeat of Fox's East India Bill in the House of Lords terminated its existence.

Burke never again held ministerial rank, but the remaining years of his life brought him fame, power, and influence far greater than ever fell to the lot of Cabinet Minister. It was during this period that he raised two of the greatest monuments of his genius—his defence of the people of India against the

oppression of Warren Hastings, and his unrelenting opposition to the revolutionary propaganda of France. The King had intended to raise him to the peerage under the title of Lord Beaconsfield, but the death of Burke's only son in 1794 deprived hereditary honours of all value in the old statesman's eyes, and the project was abandoned. This domestic calamity literally brought down his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave, and he died three years afterwards at his home at Beaconsfield, on July 8th, 1797.

The three great historical events with which ✓  
Burke's name will ever be associated are the revolt of the American Colonies, the trial of Warren Hastings, and the French Revolution. In each of ✓  
them he stands forth conspicuous as a leading actor, and in order thoroughly to understand his attitude towards them we must arrive at a correct appreciation of the principle upon which that attitude was based. It is summed up in the word Justice. As he ✓  
himself put it, "Justice is itself the great standing  
"policy of civil society, and any eminent departure  
"from it, under any circumstances, lies under the  
"suspicion of being no policy at all." This was the  
cornerstone of Burke's political edifice. It was

because the revolted colonists were struggling for justice that Burke ranged himself on their side. It was to avenge outraged justice that Burke impeached the great Governor-General of India; and it was the violation of justice by the French Jacobins that impelled Burke to call all Europe to arms against them.

✓ This intense and passionate love of justice accounts for Burke's indifference to the mere mechanical details of government, and for his contempt of the abstract theories paraded by the French republicans, under cover of which they constituted the Revolutionary Tribunal and established the guillotine. It made him also to some extent, and within very definite limits, an opportunist in the higher sense. No man ever lived who could more readily sacrifice himself for principle: witness his forfeiture of his seat for Bristol. But where practical government ✓ was concerned he derided the pedantic enforcement of theoretic rights. "The question with me," he ✓ said, "is not whether you have a right to render "your people miserable, but whether it is not your "interest to make them happy." And again: ✓ "Government is not made in virtue of natural

“rights, which may and do exist in total independence of it. Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants.”

To obtain this main end of government—justice—in a highly complex society, it was necessary, in his opinion, to devise a system of checks and counter-checks, so that no individual or class of individuals in the community should be in a position to commit injustice upon any other. It was in this respect that he saw wisdom in the British system of limited monarchy, of which he says: “The whole scheme of our mixed Constitution is to prevent any one of its principles from being carried as far as—taken by itself—it would go.” It was for this reason that he denied the right of an absolute democracy, any more than an absolute monarchy, “to be reckoned among the legitimate forms of government.” Uncontrolled power, whether in the hands of a single tyrant, a privileged class, or a promiscuous mob, was alike inimical to justice, and, therefore, on no account to be tolerated. The truth of this theory is becoming more and more apparent in our day. Wherever democracy has achieved uncontrolled power we see it violating the most elementary principles of justice,

and committing acts of oppression and spoliation which throw into the shade some of the worst excesses of crowned despots.

✓ Burke's profound knowledge of history and practical experience of contemporary politics strengthened his doubt of the wisdom of the masses, and convinced him that they could not be trusted with unfettered power. He says in one place: "In history a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from the past errors and infirmities of mankind." The record of the past proved that "errors and infirmities" were inherent in all persons and classes when endowed with supreme power; the experience of his own day showed that the masses of the people were not exempt from similar weaknesses. He had heard with his own ears the mob shouting as of old, "Not this man, but Barabbas," when the American colonists were struggling for the elementary rights of freemen, and when he was defending the peoples of India against the most intolerable oppression. It was this knowledge that made him indifferent to numerical representation in the Constitution. In one passage he says: "I see as little of policy or utility

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“as there is of right in laying down a principle that  
“a majority of men, told by the head, are to be  
“considered the people, and that as such their will  
“is to be law. To enable men to act with the weight  
“and character of a people, we must suppose them to  
“be in that state of habitual social discipline in  
“which the wiser, the more expert, and the more  
“opulent, conduct, and, by conducting, enlighten and  
“protect the weaker, the less knowing, and the less  
“provided with the goods of fortune. Numbers in a  
“State are always of consideration, but they are not  
“the whole consideration. When great multitudes  
“act together under that discipline of nature I recog-  
“nise the PEOPLE. In all things the voice of this  
“grand chorus of national harmony ought to have  
“a mighty and decisive influence. But when you  
“disturb this harmony; when you break up this  
“beautiful order, this array of truth and nature, as  
“well as of habit and prejudice; when you separate  
“the common sort of men from their proper  
“chieftains, so as to form them into an adverse  
“army, I no longer know that venerable object  
“called the people in such a disbanded army of  
“deserters and vagabonds.”

But while Burke professed a certain opportunism in practical statesmanship to meet the varying exigencies of the day, his political edifice rested upon a principle which has run through the whole of English history, and upon which the permanence of British greatness depends—the principle of individual effort and enterprise as opposed to State tutelage and control. In his masterly economic treatise, entitled “Thoughts and Details on Scarcity,” which he submitted to Pitt in 1795, he enunciates this principle in the following clear and unmistakeable terms: “It is in the power of government to prevent much evil; it can do very little positive good. “The State ought to confine itself to what is truly “and properly public; to the public peace, to the “public safety, to the public order. Statesmen who “know themselves will, with the dignity which “belongs to wisdom, proceed only in this, the “superior orb and first mover of their duty, steadily, “vigilantly, severely, courageously; whatever remains “will, in a manner, provide for itself. But as they “descend from the State to a province, from a province to a parish, and from a parish to a private “house, they go on accelerated to their fall. They

“cannot do the lower duty, and, in proportion as  
“they try it, they will certainly fail in the higher.  
“They ought to know the different departments of  
“things; what belongs to laws, and what manners  
“alone can regulate. Our Legislature has fallen  
“into this fault as well as other Governments; all  
“have fallen into it more or less. I can never quote  
“France without a foreboding sigh.....The leading  
“vice of the French monarchy was in good intention  
“ill-directed, and a restless desire of governing too  
“much. The hand of authority was seen in every-✓  
“thing and in every place. All, therefore, that  
“happened amiss in the course even of domestic  
“affairs was attributed to the Government; and, as it  
“always happens in this kind of officious universal  
“interference, what began in odious power ended  
“always, I may say without exception, in contemp-  
“tible imbecility.” In these days, when the old  
British independence of character is being sapped by  
the insidious inroads made by the State upon the  
sphere of individual action, and when “muni-  
“cipalism” threatens gradually to impose upon the  
citizen the worst form of Continental bureaucracy,  
these weighty words should be laid to heart as among

the most valuable contributions made to the instruction of mankind.

It is one of the strangest ironies of history that so many of the great men who illustrate its pages are associated with splendid failure, or, perhaps, we should rather say that they sowed in apparent failure the seed of principles which in after ages burst forth into an abundant harvest of success. The prophets have generally been stoned by their contemporaries and apotheosised by their descendants, and Burke was no exception to this rule. In two of the great struggles of his life—the Revolt of the Colonies and the Trial of Warren Hastings—he failed magnificently. In the former instance, his predictions were fulfilled to the letter, but his warnings fell on deaf ears. The “might-have-beens” of history are ever an interesting subject for consideration, and one may give free range to the imagination in speculating upon the position which the British Empire would now occupy had Burke’s wise and statesmanlike policy of conciliation been adopted. In the case of India he failed again. The great Governor-General was acquitted, after the trial had dragged its slow length along for seven years. The convulsions of

Europe during the revolutionary period obliterated the recollection of Hastings' alleged delinquencies, and the dying embers of that once blazing conflagration expired amid general indifference. But both these apparent failures contained the germ of future success. The whole subsequent Colonial and Indian policy of Great Britain was influenced by the principles which Burke enunciated with such heroic courage and such consummate power. Never again was it possible to apply the Georgian theories of government to any British Colony; and the exploitation of India in the sole interests of a commercial corporation received its quietus for ever. The Colonial policy which he set forth in the peroration to his "conciliation" speech is the policy which has ever since prevailed; and the government of our great oriental dependency has been based upon his fundamental proposition, that we can only morally justify our possession of that country by acting as the guardians of the interests of all its inhabitants.

With regard to the third great episode in Burke's career—his struggle against the doctrines of the French Revolution—it is curious to reflect that his triumph in this case has since been turned into

defeat by the verdict of posterity. The “principles “of 1789,” which were anticipated in the English constitution by Magna Charta, the Habeas Corpus Act, and the Bill of Rights, are now recognised as the basis of civilised society; and it is generally admitted that the inherent vices of the old monarchy made its root-and-branch destruction inevitable. In this instance Burke did not show his customary diligence in mastering the minutiae of the subject. While, to use his own expression, he “wound himself into the inmost “recesses and labyrinths of the Indian detail,” it is evident that he was not equally conversant with the condition of France before the Revolution. His splendid imagination concentrated itself upon the immediate sufferings of the royal family, the aristocracy, and the church, to the entire exclusion of the appalling misery into which two centuries of injustice had plunged the masses of the population.

✓ At the same time it is impossible not to be struck with the prophetic insight which he displayed in dealing with the great drama of the Revolution; he foresaw, with the glance of genius, the anarchy, to be followed by despotism, which the revolutionary

excesses would inevitably entail ; and the only mistake he made was in ascribing these disasters to the deliberate wickedness of his contemporaries, instead of to the frightful misgovernment and inhumanity which had disgraced the monarchy for many generations.

History, in recording the iniquities of the kings of France, their unscrupulous instruments and their abandoned favourites, condemns them to eternal infamy as the real authors of the Reign of Terror. The horrors of the guillotine, the September massacres, and the noyades were the harvest which sprang inevitably from the fatal seed sown by Louis XIV. and Louis XV.; by Richelieu and Mazarin ; by de Montespán and de Maintenon ; de Pompadour and du Barri.

The secret of Burke's achievement of fame and influence in the face of unparalleled obstacles lay in his profound knowledge ; his almost superhuman insight into the heart of great questions ; his unswerving adherence to principle, and his unrivalled powers in communicating his ideas to the world both by speech and pen. In this country the public man who can boldly maintain his opinions in the face of popular clamour always in the long run exacts

attention and respect. Burke's knowledge was simply monumental. During the years which intervened between his arrival in London and his entry into politics he must have studied unceasingly, for his mind was a marvellous storehouse of varied information. His practical grasp of commercial, industrial, and economic questions was perhaps the most remarkable fact of all, for his antecedents and training were not directed to that particular sphere. He anticipated most of the economic truths which Adam Smith afterwards gave to the world, and, during his career in Parliament, devoted great attention to commercial affairs. It is remarkable that a statesman who soared to the highest flights of abstract politics should at the same time have been endowed with this capacity for dealing with the practical issues of life. But in the wide range of his subjects, in the splendour of his diction, and in the brilliancy of his imagination, Burke may be described as the Shakespeare of statesmen. If we take any one of his great oratorical displays, we shall find it a complete and harmonious composition, lacking nothing that is required to make it a masterpiece. If we seek lucid exposition of a scheme of constructive policy, we find it in his speech

on Economical Reform. For invective we can turn to his masterly oration on the Nabob of Arcot's debts, or to some of his efforts in the impeachment of Hastings. One of the most appalling word-pictures of the horrors of war is that in which he describes in the "Nabob" speech the devastation of the Carnatic by Hyder Ali. Everyone has read his brilliant description of Marie Antoinette as Dauphiness, in the "Reflections on the "Revolution in France"—a description which, for beauty of imagery and impassioned eloquence, is probably unsurpassed in English literature. Or take the famous panegyric on Fox, with which he concluded his speech on the East India Bill; what a consummate piece of finished eloquence it is, what a splendid tribute of friendship to the man, and of admiration to the statesman! His written political treatises are equally good. Among others may be mentioned his "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents," a most powerful analysis of the forces that were then at work to corrupt and undermine the power and influence of the House of Commons, and to restore the dangerous preponderance of the Crown, which the previous generations had with infinite difficulty and disturbance curtailed. As an exponent of British

constitutional principles and practice he stands unrivalled. The first part of his "Reflections on "the Revolution in France," his "Appeal from the "New to the Old Whigs," and his speech at the close of the poll at Bristol in 1774, where he defines the position and duties of a Member of Parliament, all afford convincing proof of the truth of this statement.


✓ Perhaps the most significant evidence of Burke's genius is to be found in the esteem in which he was held by the great men with whom he associated. In a society comprising, among others, such intellectual giants as Sir Joshua Reynolds, Oliver Goldsmith, Edward Gibbon, and Samuel Johnson, he was recognised as more than the equal of them all. Their opinion of him was summed up in Johnson's appreciation: "Burke, Sir, is such a man that if you met "him for the first time in the street, where you were "stopped by a drove of oxen, and you and he stepped "aside to take shelter but for five minutes, he'd talk "to you in such a manner that, when you parted, you "would say, 'This is an extraordinary man.'" Nor was he less admirable on the social side than on the intellectual. The author of "Evelina," who met him in 1782, thus enthusiastically describes him: "He is

“tall, his figure is noble, his air commanding, his address graceful; his voice is clear, penetrating, sonorous, and powerful; his language is copious, various, and eloquent; his manners are attractive, his conversation delightful. Since we lost Garrick I have seen nobody so enchanting.” Miss Burney then records how he darted from subject to subject with as much rapidity as entertainment, adding: “Neither is the charm of his discourse more in the matter than the manner; all, therefore, that is related *from* him loses half its effect in not being related *by* him.” Another attribute for which Burke will always be remembered was his goodness of heart and benevolence. The poet, Crabbe, after appealing in vain to various eminent men of the day, at last found in Burke a warm and generous protector; and his practical philanthropy was manifested in innumerable cases to the victims of Indian and Jacobin oppression.

One of the greatest merits of Burke’s speeches and writings consists in their perfect symmetry and unity of composition. Hence it is difficult to convey their full value and excellence by detached passages. They resemble some harmonious masterpiece of architecture,

which must be viewed in its entirety in order to be thoroughly appreciated. Hazlitt, indeed, applies this observation to his works as a whole. "There is," he says, "no single speech of Burke's which can convey a satisfactory idea of his powers of mind : to do him justice, it would be necessary to quote all his works. The only specimen of Burke is, *all that he wrote.*" But, just as the spectator can feast his eye upon some particular beauty of a noble edifice, so can the reader turn to passages of supreme excellence in Burke's orations and dwell on them with equal zest, although to grasp their full merit his productions must be read from exordium to peroration, for it is a misfortune to miss a word.

✓ We have, in the following chapters, selected what we have thought would best present to the reader a correct view of Burke's principles as unfolded during the three great struggles of his life.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE REVOLT OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES

IN 1765, when Burke became private secretary to the Marquess of Rockingham, during that statesman's first ministry, the trouble with the American colonies was becoming acute, and took the form of bitter opposition to the hated Stamp Act. The Act was repealed in 1766, probably under Burke's influence, and he had ever since devoted his attention to the colonial question with that grasp of great principles and painstaking mastery of details which he alone among statesmen combined. The Rockingham Administration lasted only about twelve months, and the ministries that followed drove the colonists into open rebellion by their reckless disregard of the most elementary principles of justice, and their exasperating fits of overbearing truculence and craven concession. Burke maintained a consistent but futile opposition to this disastrous policy, which he predicted would end in the dismemberment of the

Empire. His protests and warnings were, however, unheeded, and he was always in a hopeless minority in the House of Commons. On April 19th, 1774, Mr. Rose Fuller, member for Rye, moved that the House "that day seven night" resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the duty of 3d. per pound on tea imposed upon the American Colonies, and also the appropriation of the said duty.

An animated and interesting debate ensued, to which Burke contributed a brilliant oration. The  
✓ line he took was that the Mother Country should seek to derive benefit from Colonial trade, and not from colonial taxation levied by the House at Westminster. The following extracts will afford a general idea of his arguments, and of the skill with which they were developed :—

" Could anything be a subject of more just alarm  
" to America than to see you go out of the plain high  
" road of finance, and give up your most certain  
" revenues and your clearest interest, merely for the  
" sake of insulting your Colonies? No man ever  
" doubted that the commodity of tea could bear an  
" imposition of threepence. But no commodity will  
" bear threepence, or will bear a penny, when the

“general feelings of men are irritated, and two  
 “millions of people are resolved not to pay. The  
 “feelings of the Colonies were formerly the feelings  
 “of Great Britain. Theirs were formerly the feel-  
 “ings of Mr. Hampden when called upon for the  
 “payment of twenty shillings. Would twenty shil-  
 “lings have ruined Mr. Hampden’s fortune? No!  
 “but the payment of half twenty shillings, on the  
 “principle it was demanded, would have made him  
 “a slave.....

“It is then, Sir, upon the *principle* of this measure,  
 “and nothing else, that we are at issue. It is a  
 “principle of political expediency. Your act of 1767  
 “asserts that it is expedient to raise a revenue in  
 “America; your act of 1769, which takes away that  
 “revenue, contradicts the act of 1767; and, by some-  
 “thing much stronger than words, asserts that it is  
 “not expedient. It is a reflection upon your wisdom  
 “to persist in a solemn parliamentary declaration of  
 “the expediency of any object, for which, at the  
 “same time, you make no sort of provision. And  
 “pray, Sir, let not this circumstance escape you; it  
 “is very material: that the preamble of this Act,  
 “which we wish to repeal, is not *declaratory of right*,

“as some gentlemen seem to argue it; it is only a  
“recital of the *expediency* of a certain exercise of a  
“right supposed already to have been asserted; an  
“exercise you are now contending for by ways and  
“means, which you confess, though they were  
“obeyed, to be utterly insufficient for their purpose.  
“You are therefore at this moment in the awkward  
“situation of fighting for a phantom; a quiddity, a  
“thing that wants, not only a substance, but even a  
“name; for a thing which is neither abstract right  
“nor profitable enjoyment.

“They tell you, Sir, that your dignity is tied to it.  
“I know not how it happens, but this dignity of  
“yours is a terrible incumbrance to you; for it has  
“of late been ever at war with your interest, your  
“equity, and every idea of your policy. Show the  
“thing you contend for to be reason; show it to be  
“common sense; show it to be the means of attain-  
“ing some useful end; and then I am content to  
“allow it what dignity you please. But what dignity  
“is derived from the perseverance in absurdity is  
“more than I ever could discern. The honourable  
“gentleman has said well—indeed, in most of his  
“*general* observations I agree with him—he says

“ that this subject does not stand as it did formerly.  
“ Oh, certainly not ! every hour you continue on this  
“ ill-chosen ground your difficulties thicken on you ;  
“ and therefore my conclusion is, remove from a bad  
“ position as quickly as you can. The disgrace, and  
“ the necessity of yielding, both of them, grow upon  
“ you every hour of your delay.”

. . . . .

“ If this dignity, which is to stand in the place of  
“ just policy and common sense, had been consulted,  
“ there was a time for preserving it, and for recon-  
“ ciling it with any concession. If in the session of  
“ 1768, that session of idle terror and empty  
“ menaces, you had, as you were often pressed to do,  
“ repealed these taxes ; then your strong operations  
“ would have come justified and enforced, in case  
“ your concessions had been returned by outrages.  
“ But, preposterously, you began with violence ; and  
“ before terrors could have any effect, either good or  
“ bad, your ministers immediately begged pardon, and  
“ promised that repeal to the obstinate Americans  
“ which they had refused in an easy, good-natured,  
“ complying British Parliament. The assemblies,  
“ which had been publicly and avowedly dissolved for

“ *their* contumacy, are called together to receive *your*  
“ submission. Your ministerial directors blustered  
“ like tragic tyrants here; and then went mumping  
“ with a sore leg in America, canting and whining,  
“ and complaining of faction, which represented them  
“ as friends to a revenue from the Colonies. I hope  
“ nobody in this House will hereafter have the impu-  
“ dence to defend American taxes in the name of  
“ ministry.”

. . . . .

✓ “ Again, and again, revert to your old principles—  
“ seek peace and ensue it—leave America, if she has  
“ taxable matter in her, to tax herself. I am not  
“ here going into the distinctions of rights, nor  
“ attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not  
“ enter into these metaphysical distinctions; I hate  
“ the very sound of them. Leave the Americans as  
“ they anciently stood, and these distinctions, born of  
“ our unhappy contest, will die along with it. They  
“ and we, and their and our ancestors, have been  
“ happy under that system. Let the memory of all  
“ actions, in contradiction to that good old mode, on  
✓ “ both sides, be extinguished for ever. Be content to  
“ bind America by laws of trade; you have always

“done it. Let this be your reason for binding their  
“trade. Do not burthen them by taxes; you were  
“not used to do so from the beginning. Let this be  
“your reason for not taxing. These are the argu-  
“ments of states and kingdoms. Leave the rest to  
“the schools; for there only they may be discussed  
“with safety. But if, intemperately, unwisely,  
“fatally, you sophisticate and poison the very source  
“of government, by urging subtle deductions, and  
“consequences odious to those you govern, from the  
“unlimited and illimitable nature of supreme sover-  
“eignty, you will teach them by these means to call  
“that sovereignty itself in question. When you  
“drive him hard, the boar will surely turn upon the  
“hunters. If that sovereignty and their freedom  
“cannot be reconciled, which will they take? They  
“will cast your sovereignty in your face. Nobody  
“will be argued into slavery. Sir, let the gentlemen  
“on the other side call forth all their ability; let the  
“best of them get up and tell me what one character  
“of liberty the Americans have, and what one brand  
“of slavery they are free from, if they are bound in  
“their property and industry by all the restraints  
“you can imagine on commerce, and at the same

“time are made pack-horses of every tax you choose  
“to impose, without the least share in granting  
“them. When they bear the burthens of unlimited  
“monopoly, will you bring them to bear the burthens  
“of unlimited revenue too? The Englishman in  
“America will feel that this is slavery—that it is  
“*legal* slavery, will be no compensation either to his  
“feelings or his understanding.

✓ “A noble lord [Lord Carmarthen], who spoke  
“some time ago, is full of the fire of ingenuous  
“youth; and when he has modelled the ideas of a  
“lively imagination by further experience, he will be  
✓ “an ornament to his country in either House. He  
“has said that the Americans are our children, and  
“how can they revolt against their parent? He says  
“that, if they are not free in their present state,  
“England is not free; because Manchester and other  
“considerable places are not represented. So, then,  
“because some towns in England are not represented,  
“America is to have no representative at all. They  
“are ‘our children’; but when children ask for  
“bread, we are not to give a stone. Is it because the  
“natural resistance of things, and the various muta-  
“tions of time, hinder our government, or any

“ scheme of government, from being any more than  
“ a sort of approximation to the right—is it, therefore,  
“ that the Colonies are to recede from it infinitely?  
“ When this child of ours wishes to assimilate to its ✓  
“ parent, and to reflect with a true filial resemblance  
“ the beauteous countenance of British liberty, are we  
“ to turn to them the shameful parts of our constitu-  
“ tion? are we to give them our weakness for their  
“ strength, our opprobrium for their glory, and the  
“ slough of slavery, which we are not able to work  
“ off, to serve them for their freedom?

“ If this be the case, ask yourselves this question, ✓  
“ Will they be content in such a state of slavery? If ✓  
“ not, look to the consequences. Reflect how you are  
“ to govern a people who think they ought to be free  
“ and think they are not. Your scheme yields no  
“ revenue; it yields nothing but discontent, disorder,  
“ disobedience; and such is the state of America,  
“ that, after wading up to your eyes in blood, you  
“ could only end just where you began—that is, to  
“ tax where no revenue is to be found, to—my voice  
“ fails me; my inclination, indeed, carries me no  
“ further—all is confusion beyond it.

“ Well, Sir, I have recovered a little, and before I

✓ “ sit down I must say something to another point  
✓ “ with which gentlemen urge us. What is to become  
“ of the declaratory act asserting the entireness of  
“ British legislative authority, if we abandon the  
“ practice of taxation ?

“ For my part, I look upon the rights stated in that  
“ act exactly in the manner in which I viewed them  
“ on its very first proposition, and which I have  
“ often taken the liberty, with great humility, to lay  
“ before you. I look, I say, on the imperial rights  
“ of Great Britain, and the privileges which the  
“ Colonists ought to enjoy under these rights, to be  
“ just the most reconcilable things in the world. The  
“ Parliament of Great Britain sits at the head of her  
“ extensive empire in two capacities : one as the local  
“ legislature of this island, providing for all things at  
“ home, immediately, and by no other instrument  
“ than the executive power ; the other, and I think  
“ her nobler capacity, is what I call her *imperial*  
“ *character*, in which, as from the throne of heaven,  
“ she superintends all the several inferior legislatures,  
“ and guides and controls them all, without anni-  
“ hilating any. As all these provincial legislatures  
“ are only co-ordinate to each other, they ought all

“to be subordinate to her; else they can neither  
“preserve mutual peace, nor hope for mutual justice,  
“nor effectually afford mutual assistance.

. . . . .

“On this business of America I confess I am ✓  
“serious, even to sadness. I have had but one  
“opinion concerning it since I sat, and before I sat,  
“in Parliament. The noble lord [Lord North] will, ✓  
“as usual, probably, attribute the part taken by me  
“and my friends in this business to a desire of getting  
“his places. Let him enjoy this happy and original  
“idea. If I deprived him of it, I should take away ✓  
“most of his wit, and all his argument. But I had  
“rather bear the brunt of all his wit, and, indeed,  
“blows much heavier, than stand answerable to God  
“for embracing a system that tends to the destruction  
“of some of the very best and fairest of his works.  
“But I know the map of England, as well as the  
“noble lord, or as any other person; and I know that  
“the way I take is not the road to preferment. My  
“excellent and honourable friend under me on the  
“floor [Mr. Dowdeswell] has trod that road with  
“great toil for upwards of twenty years together.  
“He is not yet arrived at the noble lord’s destination.

“ However, the tracks of my worthy friend are those  
“ I have ever wished to follow ; because I know they  
“ lead to honour. Long may we tread the same road  
✓ “ together, whoever may accompany us, or whoever  
✓ “ may laugh at us on our journey. I honestly and  
“ solemnly declare I have in all seasons adhered to  
“ the system of 1766,\* for no other reason than that I  
“ think it laid deep in your truest interests, and that,  
“ by limiting the exercise, it fixes on the firmest  
“ foundations a real, consistent, well-grounded  
✓ “ authority in Parliament. Until you come back to  
“ that system there will be no peace for England.”

✓ On March 22nd, 1775, Burke again brought the  
question before the House of Commons in a series of  
resolutions affirming that the North American Colonies  
had been taxed by the Imperial Parliament without  
representation there ; that, owing to the distance of  
the Colonies from the Mother Country and other  
circumstances, no method had hitherto been devised  
✓ for procuring such representation. That each Colony  
possessed a General Assembly of its own, which had

That is to the policy of the first Rockingham Administration.

at various times freely granted subsidies for the King's service ; and that their right to grant the same, and their readiness to do so, had been frequently acknowledged by Parliament. That experience showed that this mode of voting supplies was better than that of granting subsidies in Parliament to be raised and paid in the Colonies. That it might be desirable to repeal the Acts for taxing the Colonies, and for coercing those who had resisted them. That it might be proper that Colonial judges should hold office during good behaviour, and be only removable by the King in Council ; and that it would be proper to improve the Admiralty Courts and make better provision for the judges thereof.

During the year that had elapsed since Burke's previous oration, matters had been going from bad to worse in the relations between England and her North American possessions. The Home Government had passed various acts of coercion and reprisal, which had set the whole of the Colonies in a blaze, and united them in one common bond of union against their oppressors. The most notable of these were the Boston Port Act, closing that town against all commerce until the tea, which had been thrown

into the harbour, should be paid for ; and the Massachusetts Act, which suppressed the charter of that State and practically established martial law. The Colonists met in Congress at Philadelphia in September, 1774, and adopted addresses to the King, ignoring altogether the British Parliament. They declared their approval of the resistance already offered by the inhabitants of Massachusetts to the execution of the obnoxious Acts, and further declared that, "if the same were attempted to be carried into execution by force, in such case all America ought to support them in their opposition."

✓ When Burke made this second and greater oration, which is known as the "Speech on Conciliation with America," the relations between England and her Colonies had become strained to breaking-point. At the opening of Parliament in November, 1774, the two Houses presented a joint address to the King, declaring Massachusetts to be in rebellion, and offering all the resources of the Empire to suppress it; and the King, in his reply, announced his intention of acting as Parliament wished. From these facts some conception may be formed of Burke's courage in advocating a policy of conciliation

at a time when the country was aflame with warlike passions and bitter hostility to her "rebellious children." Within a month of the rejection of his resolutions by 270 against 78 the first encounter took place at Lexington between the Royal and Colonial forces, thus commencing the struggle which resulted in the establishment of the United States of America.

He opens with a survey of the subject from his entering the House in 1765 until the beginning of the current session, when Mr. Rose Fuller, who moved the resolution which led to the debate above recorded, impressed upon him the imperative duty of the Opposition to formulate some definite policy to remedy the shocking state of affairs induced by ministerial mismanagement. Burke says he shrank at first from assuming such a serious responsibility ; but the alarming condition of the Colonies overcame his scruples, and he drew up the resolutions which he now submitted to the House. He then proceeds as follows :—

"To restore order and repose to an empire so  
"great and so distracted as ours, is, merely in the  
"attempt, an undertaking that would ennoble the

“ flights of the highest genius, and obtain pardon  
“ for the efforts of the meanest understanding.  
“ Struggling a good while with these thoughts, by  
“ degrees I felt myself more firm. I derived, at  
“ length, some confidence from what, in other  
“ circumstances, usually produces timidity. I grew  
“ less anxious, even from the idea of my own  
“ insignificance. For, judging of what you are by  
“ what you ought to be, I persuaded myself that you  
“ would not reject a reasonable proposition because  
“ it had nothing but its reason to recommend it. On  
“ the other hand, being totally destitute of all shadow  
“ of influence, natural or adventitious, I was very  
“ sure that if my proposition were futile or  
“ dangerous, if it were weakly conceived or  
“ improperly timed, there was nothing exterior to  
“ it of power to awe, dazzle, or delude you. You will  
“ see it just as it is; and you will treat it just as it  
“ deserves.

“ The proposition is peace. Not peace through the  
“ medium of war; not peace to be hunted through  
“ the labyrinth of intricate and endless negotiations;  
“ not peace to arise out of universal discord, fomented  
“ from principle, in all parts of the empire; not

“peace to depend on the juridical determination of  
“perplexing questions, or the precise marking the  
“shadowy boundaries of a complex government. It  
“is simple peace, sought in its natural course, and in  
“its ordinary haunts. It is peace sought in the ✓  
“spirit of peace, and laid in principles purely  
“pacific. I propose, by removing the ground of the ✓  
“difference, and by restoring the *former unsuspecting*  
“*confidence of the Colonies in the Mother Country*,  
“to give permanent satisfaction to your people, and  
“(far from a scheme of ruling by discord) to  
“reconcile them to each other in the same act and by  
“the bond of the very same interest which reconciles  
“them to British government.

“My idea is nothing more. Refined policy ever  
“has been the parent of confusion, and ever will be  
“so long as the world endures. Plain, good inten-  
“tion, which is as easily discovered at the first view  
“as fraud is surely detected at last, is, let me say, of  
“no mean force in the government of mankind.  
“Genuine simplicity of heart is an healing and  
“cementing principle. My plan, therefore, being  
“formed upon the most simple grounds imaginable,  
“may disappoint some people when they hear it.

“It has nothing to recommend it to the pruriency of  
 “curious ears. There is nothing at all new and  
 “captivating in it.....It does not propose to fill  
 “your lobby with squabbling colony agents who will  
 “require the interposition of your mace at every  
 “instant to keep the peace amongst them. It does  
 “not institute a magnificent auction of finance, where  
 “captivated provinces come to general ransom by  
 “bidding against each other until you knock down  
 “the hammer and determine a proportion of pay-  
 “ments beyond all the powers of algebra to equalise  
 “and settle.”

. . . . .

✓ “The capital leading questions on which you must  
 “this day decide are these two. First, whether you  
 “ought to concede; and secondly, what your conces-  
 “sion ought to be.”

✓ He then goes into a consideration of the population  
 and trade of the Colonies, showing the extraordinary  
 growth of the latter from 1704 to 1772, which he  
 describes with consummate art in the following  
 famous passage:—

“Mr. Speaker, I cannot prevail on myself to hurry  
 “over this great consideration. It is good for us to

“be here. We stand where we have an immense  
“view of what is and what is past. Clouds indeed,  
“and darkness, rest upon the future. Let us, how-  
“ever, before we descend from this noble eminence  
“reflect that this growth of our national prosperity  
“has happened within the short period of the life of  
“man. It has happened within sixty-eight years.  
“There are those alive whose memory might touch  
“the two extremities. For instance, my Lord  
“Bathurst might remember all the stages of the  
“progress. He was in 1704 of an age at least to be  
“made to comprehend such things. He was then  
“old enough *acta parentum jam legere, et quæ poterit*  
“*cognoscere virtus*. Suppose, Sir, that the angel of  
“this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues,  
“which made him one of the most amiable, as he is  
“one of the most fortunate men of his age, had  
“opened to him in vision that, when, in the fourth  
“generation, the third prince of the house of Bruns-  
“wick had sat twelve years on the throne of that  
“nation, which (by the happy issue of moderate and  
“healing councils) was to be made Great Britain, he  
“should see his son, Lord Chancellor of England,  
“turn back the current of hereditary dignity to its

“ fountain, and raise him to an higher rank of peerage,  
“ whilst he enriched the family with a new one. If,  
“ amidst these bright and happy scenes of domestic  
“ honour and prosperity, that angel should have  
“ drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the rising  
“ glories of his country, and, whilst he was gazing with  
“ admiration on the then commercial grandeur of  
“ England, the genius should point out to him a  
“ little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the  
“ national interest, a small seminal principle, rather  
“ than a formed body, and should tell him: ‘ Young  
“ ‘ man, there is America—which at this day serves  
“ ‘ for little more than to amuse you with stories of  
“ ‘ savage men and uncouth manners; yet shall,  
“ ‘ before you taste of death, show itself equal to the  
“ ‘ whole of that commerce which now attracts the  
“ ‘ envy of the world. Whatever England has been  
“ ‘ growing to by a progressive increase of improve-  
“ ‘ ment, brought in by varieties of people, by succes-  
“ ‘ sion of civilising conquests and civilising settle-  
“ ‘ ments in a series of seventeen hundred years,  
“ ‘ you shall see as much added to her by America in  
“ ‘ the course of a single life!’ If this state of his  
“ country had been foretold to him, would it not

“require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and  
“all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him  
“believe it? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it!  
“Fortunate, indeed, if he lives to see nothing that  
“shall vary the prospect and cloud the setting of his  
“day!”

After completing his survey of the physical resources of the Colonies, he proceeds thus :—

“I am sensible, Sir, that all which I have asserted,  
“in my detail, is admitted in the gross; but that  
“quite a different conclusion is drawn from it.  
“America, gentlemen say, is a noble object. It is  
“an object well worth fighting for. Certainly it is,  
“if fighting a people be the best way of gaining  
“them. Gentlemen in this respect will be led to  
“their choice of means by their complexions and  
“their habits. Those who understand the military  
“art will, of course, have some predilection for it.  
“Those who wield the thunder of the State may have  
“more confidence in the efficacy of arms. But I ✓  
“confess, possibly for want of this knowledge, my  
“opinion is much more in favour of prudent manage-  
“ment than of force; considering force not as an  
“odious but a feeble instrument for preserving a

“people so numerous, so active, so growing, so  
“spirited as this, in a profitable and subordinate  
“connection with us.

✓ “First, Sir, permit me to observe that the use of  
“force alone is but *temporary*. It may subdue for a  
“moment, but it does not remove the necessity of  
“subduing again; and a nation is not governed  
“which is perpetually to be conquered.

✓ “My next objection is its *uncertainty*. Terror is  
“not always the effect of force; and an armament is  
“not a victory. If you do not succeed, you are  
“without resource, for, conciliation failing, force  
“remains; but, force failing, no further hope of  
“reconciliation is left. Power and authority are  
“sometimes bought by kindness; but they can  
“never be begged as alms by an impoverished and  
“defeated violence.

“A further objection to force is that you *impair the*  
“*object* by your very endeavours to preserve it. The  
“thing you fought for is not the thing which you  
“recover, but depreciated, sunk, wasted, and con-  
“sumed in the contest. Nothing less will content me  
“than *whole America*. I do not choose to consume  
“its strength along with our own, because in all

“ parts it is the British strength that I consume. I  
“ do not choose to be caught by a foreign enemy at  
“ the end of this exhausting conflict, and still less in  
“ the midst of it. I may escape ; but I can make no  
“ insurance against such an event. Let me add that  
“ I do not choose wholly to break the American spirit,  
“ because it is the spirit that has made the country.

“ Lastly, we have no sort of *experience* in favour of  
“ force as an instrument in the rule of our Colonies.  
“ Their growth and their utility have been owing to  
“ methods altogether different. Our ancient indul-  
“ gence has been said to be pursued to a fault. It  
“ may be so. But we know, if feeling is evidence,  
“ that our fault was more tolerable than our attempt  
“ to mend it ; and our sin far more salutary than our  
“ penitence.

“ These, Sir, are my reasons for not entertaining  
“ that high opinion of untried forces by which many  
“ gentlemen, for whose sentiments in other par-  
“ ticulars I have great respect, seem to be so greatly  
“ captivated. But there is still behind a third  
“ consideration concerning this object, which serves to  
“ determine my opinion on the sort of policy which  
“ ought to be pursued in the management of America,

“even more than its population and its commerce—I mean its *temper and character*.”

He next points out that a fierce and unconquerable love of freedom has been engendered in the Colonists by causes which he thus describes:—

“Then, Sir, from these six capital sources of descent, of form of government, of religion in the northern provinces, of manners in the southern, of education, of the remoteness of situation from the first mover of government—from all these causes a fierce spirit of liberty has grown up. It has grown with the growth of the people in your Colonies, and increased with the increase of their wealth; a spirit that, unhappily meeting with an exercise of power in England which, however lawful, is not reconcilable to any ideas of liberty, much less with theirs, has kindled this flame that is ready to consume us.”

He then shows how the attempts made to stamp out this spirit of liberty have proved utterly futile, and proceeds:—

“But, Sir, in wishing to put an end to pernicious experiments, I do not mean to preclude the fullest inquiry; far from it. Far from deciding on a

“ sudden or partial view, I would patiently go round  
“ and round the subject, and survey it minutely in  
“ every possible aspect. Sir, if I were capable of  
“ engaging you to an equal attention, I would state  
“ that, as far as I am capable of discerning, there are  
“ but three ways of proceeding relative to this  
“ stubborn spirit which prevails in your Colonies  
“ and disturbs your government. These are: To  
“ change that spirit, as inconvenient, by removing  
“ the causes; to prosecute it as criminal; or, to  
“ comply with it as necessary. I would not be guilty  
“ of an imperfect enumeration; I can think of but  
“ these three. Another has, indeed, been started—  
“ that of giving up the Colonies; but it met so slight  
“ a reception that I do not think myself obliged to  
“ dwell a great while upon it. It is nothing but a  
“ little sally of anger, like the frowardness of peevish  
“ children, who, when they cannot get all they would  
“ have, are resolved to take nothing.”

Next he considers three several plans for putting an end to the dispute, and shows that the third—concession to the American spirit—is the only practical one:—

“ If, then, the removal of the causes of this spirit

“ of American liberty be, for the greater part, or  
“ rather entirely, impracticable ; if the ideas of  
“ criminal process be inapplicable, or, if applicable,  
“ are in the highest degree inexpedient, what way yet  
“ remains? No way is open, but the third and last—  
“ to comply with the American spirit as necessary ;  
“ or, if you please, to submit to it, as a necessary evil.

“ If we adopt this mode, if we mean to conciliate  
“ and concede, let us see of what nature the concession  
“ ought to be : to ascertain the nature of our con-  
“ cession, we must look at their complaint. The  
“ Colonies complain that they have not the charac-  
“ teristic mark and seal of British freedom. They  
“ complain that they are taxed in a Parliament in  
“ which they are not represented. If you mean to  
“ satisfy them at all, you must satisfy them with  
“ regard to this complaint. If you mean to please  
“ any people, you must give them the boon which  
“ they ask ; not what you may think better for them,  
“ but of a kind totally different. Such an act may  
“ be a wise regulation, but it is no concession ; whereas  
“ our present theme is the mode of giving satisfaction.

“ Sir, I think you must perceive that I am resolved  
“ this day to have nothing at all to do with the

“question of the right of taxation. Some gentlemen  
“startle, it is true; I put it totally out of the ques-  
“tion. It is less than nothing in my consideration.  
“I do not, indeed, wonder, nor will you, Sir, that  
“gentlemen of profound learning are fond of dis-  
“playing it on this profound subject. But my con-  
“sideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited  
“to the policy of the question. I do not examine  
“whether the giving away a man’s money be a power  
“excepted and reserved out of the general trust of  
“government, and how far all mankind, in all forms  
“of polity, are entitled to an exercise of that right  
“by the charter of nature. Or whether, on the  
“contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved  
“in the general principle of legislation, and in-  
“separable from the ordinary supreme power. These  
“are deep questions, where great names militate  
“against each other, where reason is perplexed, and  
“an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion.  
“For high and reverend authorities lift up their  
“heads on both sides; and there is no sure footing in  
“the middle. This point is the *great Serbonian*  
“*bog, betwixt Damietta and Mount Casius old, where*  
“*armies whole have sunk.* I do not intend to be

“overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respect-  
“able company. The question with me is not  
✓ “whether you have a right to render your people  
“miserable, but whether it is not your interest to  
“make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells  
✓ “me I *may* do, but what humanity, reason, and  
“justice tell me I ought to do. Is a politic act the  
✓ “worse for being a generous one? Is no concession  
✓ “proper but that which is made from your want of  
“right to keep what you grant? Or does it lessen  
“the grace or dignity of relaxing in the exercise of an  
“odious claim because you have your evidence-room  
“full of titles and your magazines stuffed with arms  
“to enforce them? What signify all those titles  
“and all those arms? Of what avail are they when  
“the reason of the thing tells me that the assertion  
“of my title is the loss of my suit, and that I could  
“do nothing but wound myself by the use of my own  
“weapons?

“Such is steadfastly my opinion of the absolute  
“necessity of keeping up the concord of this empire  
“by a unity of spirit, though in a diversity of opera-  
“tions, that, if I were sure the Colonists had, at their  
“leaving this country, sealed a regular compact of

“servitude; that they had solemnly abjured all the  
“rights of citizens; that they had made a vow to  
“renounce all ideas of liberty for them and their  
“posterity, to all generations, yet I should hold  
“myself obliged to conform to the temper I found  
“universally prevalent in my own day, and to govern  
“two million of men, impatient of servitude, on the  
“principles of freedom. I am not determining a  
“point of law; I am restoring tranquillity; and the  
“general character and situation of a people must  
“determine what sort of government is fitted for  
“them. That point nothing else can, or ought to,  
“determine.

“My idea, therefore, without considering whether  
“we yield as matter of right or grant as matter of  
“favour, is to *admit the people of our Colonies into an*  
“*interest in the Constitution*; and, by recording that  
“admission in the journals of Parliament, to give  
“them as strong an assurance as the nature of the  
“thing will admit, that we mean for ever to adhere  
“to that solemn declaration of systematic indulgence.”

To apply this policy of conciliation, he says he will consult the genius of the English Constitution, and quotes the historical examples of the treatment of

Ireland, Wales, Chester, and Durham in support of his proposal. Then he continues :—

“ You will now, Sir, perhaps imagine that I am on  
“ the point of proposing to you a scheme for a repre-  
“ sentation of the Colonies in Parliament. Perhaps  
“ I might be inclined to entertain some such thought;  
“ but a great flood stops me in my course. *Opposuit*  
“ *natura*—I cannot remove the eternal barriers of the  
“ creation. The thing in that mode I do not know to  
“ be possible. As I meddle with no theory, I do not  
“ absolutely assert the impracticability of such a  
“ representation. But I do not see my way to it;  
“ and those who have been more confident have not  
“ been more successful. However, the arm of  
“ public benevolence is not shortened, and there are  
“ often several means to the same end. What nature  
“ has disjoined in one way, wisdom may unite in  
“ another. When we cannot give the benefit as we  
“ would wish, let us not refuse it altogether. If we  
“ cannot give the principal, let us find a substitute.  
“ But how? Where? What substitute?

“ Fortunately, I am not obliged for the ways and  
“ means of this substitute to tax my own unpro-  
“ ductive invention. I am not even obliged to go to

“ the rich treasury of the fertile framers of imaginary  
“ commonwealths; not to the Republic of Plato;  
“ not to the Utopia of More; not to the Oceana of  
“ Harrington. It is before me; it is at my feet, and  
“ *the rude swain treads daily on it with his clouted*  
“ *shoon*. I only wish you to recognise, for the  
“ theory, the ancient constitutional policy of this  
“ kingdom with regard to representation as that  
“ policy has been declared in Acts of Parliament;  
“ and as to the practice, to return to that mode which  
“ an uniform experience has marked out to you as  
“ best, and in which you walked with security,  
“ advantage, and honour until the year 1763.

“ My Resolutions, therefore, mean to establish the ✓  
“ equity and justice of a taxation of America by  
“ *grant*, and not by *imposition*. To mark the *legal* ✓  
“ *competency* of the Colony assemblies for the support  
“ of their government in peace and for public aids  
“ in time of war. To acknowledge that this *legal* ✓  
“ *competency* has had *a dutiful and beneficial exercise*,  
“ and that experience has shown *the benefit of their*  
“ *grants* and the *futility of Parliamentary taxation as a*  
“ *method of supply*.

“ These solid truths compose six fundamental

“propositions. There are three more resolutions  
“corollary to these. If you admit the first set, you  
“can hardly reject the others. But if you admit the  
“first, I shall be far from solicitous whether you  
“accept or refuse the last. I think these six massive  
“pillars will be of strength sufficient to support the  
“temple of British concord. I have no more doubt  
“than I entertain of my existence that if you  
“admitted these you would command an immediate  
“peace, and, with but tolerable future management,  
“a lasting obedience in America. I am not arrogant  
“in this confident assurance. The propositions are  
“all mere matters of fact; and if they are such facts  
“as draw irresistible conclusions even in the stating,  
“this is the power of truth, and not any management  
“of mine.”

He next states his six resolutions, explains their purport, and justifies their acceptance. Then he subjects Lord North's proposition for dealing with the matter to a destructive criticism, comparing it most unfavourably with his own, and concludes with the following superb peroration:—

“But to clear up my ideas on this subject—a  
“revenue from America transmitted hither—do not

“delude yourselves—you never can receive it; no,  
“not a shilling. We have experience that from  
“remote countries it is not to be expected. If, when  
“you attempted to extract revenue from Bengal, you  
“were obliged to return in loan what you had taken  
“in imposition, what can you expect from North  
“America? For certainly, if ever there was a country  
“qualified to produce wealth, it is India; or an  
“institution fit for the transmission, it is the East  
“India Company. America has none of these  
“aptitudes. If America gives you taxable objects, ✓  
“on which you lay your duties here, and gives you,  
“at the same time, a surplus by a foreign sale of her  
“commodities to pay the duties on these objects  
“which you tax at home, she has performed her part  
“to the British revenue. But with regard to her  
“own internal establishments; she may, I doubt not  
“she will, contribute in moderation. I say in mode-  
“ration; for she ought not to be permitted to exhaust  
“herself. She ought to be reserved to a war, the  
“weight of which, with the enemies that we are most  
“likely to have, must be considerable in her quarter  
“of the globe. There she may serve you, and serve  
“you essentially.

“ For that service, for all service, whether of  
“ revenue, trade, or Empire, my trust is in her  
“ interest in the British constitution. My hold of the  
✓ “ Colonies is in the close affection which grows from  
“ common names, from kindred blood, from similar  
“ privileges, and equal protection. These are ties  
“ which, though light as air, are as strong as links of  
“ iron. Let the Colonies always keep the idea of  
“ their civil rights associated with your Government ;  
“ they will cling and grapple to you ; and no force  
“ under heaven will be of power to tear them from  
✓ “ their allegiance. But let it be once understood that  
“ your government may be one thing and their privi-  
“ leges another, that these two things may exist  
“ without any mutual relation, the cement is gone,  
“ the cohesion is loosened, and everything hastens to  
“ decay and dissolution. As long as you have the  
“ wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this  
“ country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred  
“ temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever  
“ the chosen race and sons of England worship free-  
“ dom, they will turn their faces towards you. The  
“ more they multiply, the more friends you will have ;  
“ the more ardently they love liberty, the more

“ perfect will be their obedience. Slavery they can  
“ have anywhere. It is a weed that grows in every  
“ soil. They may have it from Spain, they may have  
“ it from Prussia. But until you become lost to all  
“ feeling of your true interest and your natural  
“ dignity, freedom they can have from none but you.  
“ This is the commodity of price, of which you have  
“ the monopoly. This is the true act of navigation  
“ which binds to you the commerce of the Colonies,  
“ and through them secures to you the wealth of the  
“ world. Deny them this participation of freedom,  
“ and you break that sole bond which originally  
“ made, and must still preserve, the unity of the  
“ Empire. Do not entertain so weak an imagination  
“ as that your registers and your bonds, your affi-  
“ davits and your sufferances, your cockets and your  
“ clearances, are what form the great securities of  
“ your commerce. Do not dream that your letters of  
“ office, and your instructions, and your suspending  
“ clauses, are the things that hold together the great  
“ contexture of this mysterious whole. These things  
“ do not make your Government. Dead instruments, ✓  
“ passive tools as they are, it is the spirit of the  
“ English communion that gives all their life and

✓ “ efficacy to them. It is the spirit of the English  
“ constitution which, infused through the mighty  
“ mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies,  
“ every part of the Empire, even down to the  
“ minutest member.

“ Is it not the same virtue which does everything  
“ for us here in England? Do you imagine, then,  
“ that it is the Land Tax Act which raises your  
“ revenue? that it is the annual vote in the Com-  
“ mittee of Supply which gives you your army? or  
“ that it is the Mutiny Bill which inspires it with  
“ bravery and discipline? No; surely no! It is the  
“ love of the people; it is their attachment to their  
“ Government from the sense of the deep stake they  
“ have in such a glorious institution, which gives you  
“ your army and your navy, and infuses into both  
“ that liberal obedience without which your army  
“ would be a base rabble, and your navy nothing but  
“ rotten timber.

“ All this, I know well enough, will sound wild and  
“ chimerical to the profane herd of those vulgar and  
“ mechanical politicians who have no place among  
“ us; a sort of people who think that nothing exists  
“ but what is gross and material; and who, therefore,

“ far from being qualified to be directors of the great  
“ movement of empire, are not fit to turn a wheel in  
“ the machine. But to men truly initiated and  
“ rightly taught, these ruling and master principles  
“ which, in the opinion of such men as I have men-  
“ tioned, have no substantial existence, are in truth  
“ everything, and all in all. Magnanimity in politics  
“ is not seldom the truest wisdom ; and a great  
“ empire and little minds go ill together. If we are  
“ conscious of our situation, and glow with zeal to  
“ fill our places as becomes our station and ourselves,  
“ we ought to auspicate all our public proceedings on  
“ America with the old warning of the Church,  
“ *Sursum corda!* We ought to elevate our minds to  
“ the greatness of that trust to which the order of  
“ Providence has called us. By adverting to the ✓  
“ dignity of this high calling our ancestors have  
“ turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire ;  
“ and have made the most extensive and the only  
“ honourable conquests ; not by destroying, but by  
“ promoting, the wealth, the number, the happiness  
“ of the human race. Let us get an American ✓  
“ revenue as we have got an American empire.  
“ English privileges have made it all that it is ;

- ✓ “English privileges alone will make it all it can be.
- ✓ “In full confidence of this unalterable truth, I now  
“ (*quod felix faustumque sit*) lay the first stone of the  
“ temple of peace.”

## CHAPTER III.

### INDIAN AFFAIRS

THE struggle in which Burke had been engaged since 1765 was ended by the recognition of the Independence of the United States of America by the Mother Country on November 30th, 1782. He was now able to devote his whole attention to Indian affairs, in which he had long taken a special interest. Strange tales of rapacity and tyranny occasionally filtered through to England from the East, and the deportment of the "Nabobs" who returned home after "shaking the pagoda tree" was not calculated to make them popular. Their ill-gotten wealth was frequently employed in borough-mongering and in supporting the "Court Party" in Parliament, and Burke had, therefore, been carefully watching their proceedings for many years past. The American War had, however, pushed Indian affairs into the background, and it was not until February 28th, 1785, that he opened his campaign against the

despoilers of the Indian peoples in a brilliant speech in the House of Commons on the Nabob of Arcot's debts. The subject does not sound very attractive, but Burke invested it with all the glamour of his incomparable oratory. The Nabob of Arcot was a potentate in the southern part of India, who had fallen into the clutches of a gang of unscrupulous harpies in the East India Company's service. He owed his position to the intervention of the Company, who, by force of arms, had seated him on the throne against the claims of his brother and other competitors. About the year 1765 he began (as he alleged), at the instigation of the servants of the Company, to form designs for the extension of his territory. His ambition could only be achieved by the Company's assistance, and in order to secure this he entered into a secret and corrupt understanding with some of its servants to use its power for his aggrandisement, without openly committing it to his cause. The result was that the Englishmen in the plot amassed enormous fortunes, and the Nabob incurred a correspondingly gigantic debt. A good deal of this debt was of a purely fictitious character; a paper liability, representing no actual cash received,

but deliberately manufactured for the benefit of the corrupt gang of Europeans. The scandal leaked out, and assumed such proportions that an inquiry was demanded into the facts. This was conceded by Pitt, but the investigation was relegated to the Court of Directors of the East India Company, who found the debt to amount, with compound interest, to an enormous sum, and they ordered the President and Council of Madras to examine fully into its origin and nature. But the Ministry reversed their former decision, and, without further inquiry, the whole of the alleged liability was recognised, and its discharge was settled on the revenues of the Carnatic. This decision the Board of Directors was required to acknowledge as their own.

The whole proceedings were so mysterious and discreditable that Fox, on February 28th, 1785, moved for papers on the subject, his resolution being, of course, in the then state of parties, rejected by a very large majority.

In his speech Burke thus describes one method adopted for the manufacture of the Nabob's bogus liabilities :—

“ The manner in which this transaction was carried

“ on shows that good examples are not easily forgot,  
“ especially by those who are bred in a great school.  
“ One of those splendid examples, give me leave to  
“ mention at a somewhat more early period, because  
“ one fraud furnishes light to the discovery of another,  
“ and so on, until the whole secret of mysterious  
“ iniquity bursts upon you in a blaze of detection.  
“ The paper I shall read you is not on record. If  
“ you please, you may take it on my word. It is a  
“ letter written from one of undoubted information  
“ in Madras, to Sir John Clavering, describing the  
“ practice that prevailed there, while the Company’s  
“ allies were under sale, during the time of Governor  
“ Winch’s administration.

“ ‘ One mode,’ says Clavering’s correspondent, ‘ of  
“ ‘ amassing money at the Nabob’s cost is curious.  
“ ‘ He is generally in arrears to the Company. Here  
“ ‘ the governor, being cash keeper, is generally on  
“ ‘ good terms with the banker, who manages matters  
“ ‘ thus: The governor presses the Nabob for the  
“ ‘ balance due from him; the Nabob flies to his  
“ ‘ banker for relief; the banker engages to pay the  
“ ‘ money, and grants his notes accordingly, which he  
“ ‘ puts in the cash-book as ready money; the Nabob

“ ‘pays him an interest for it at *two and three per*  
“ ‘*cent. per mensem* till the tunkaws he grants on the  
“ ‘particular districts for it are paid. Matters in the  
“ ‘meantime are so managed that there is no call  
“ ‘for this money for the Company’s service till the  
“ ‘tunkaws become due. By this means not a cash  
“ ‘is advanced by the banker, though he receives a  
“ ‘heavy interest from the Nabob, which is divided as  
“ ‘lawful spoil.’

“ Here, Mr. Speaker, you have the whole art and  
“ mystery, the true freemason secret of the profession  
“ of *soucaring* ; by which a few innocent, inexperienced  
“ young Englishmen, such as Mr. Paul Benfield, for  
“ instance, without property upon which anyone  
“ would lend to themselves a single shilling, are  
“ enabled at once to take provinces in mortgage, to  
“ make princes their debtors, and to become creditors  
“ for millions.”

While Mr. Paul Benfield and his associates had been fleecing the Nabob for their own advantage, they had, it appears, been inducing natives to entrust them with money at rates of interest which, being in excess of that permitted by law, left the lenders entirely at the mercy of this group of plunderers.

Burke deals with this phase of the subject as follows :—

“ There is little doubt that several individuals have  
“ been seduced by the purveyors to the Nabob of  
“ Arcot to put their money (perhaps the whole of  
“ honest and laborious earnings) into their hands,  
“ and that at such high interest as, being condemned  
“ at law, leaves them at the mercy of the great  
“ managers whom they trusted. These seduced  
“ creditors are probably persons of no power or  
“ interest, either in England or India, and may be  
“ just objects of compassion. By taking, in this  
“ arrangement, no measures for discrimination and  
“ discovery, the fraudulent and the fair are, in the  
“ first instance, confounded in one mass. The sub-  
“ sequent selection and distribution is left to the Nabob.  
“ With him the agents and instruments of his cor-  
“ ruption, whom he sees to be omnipotent in England,  
“ and who may serve him in future, as they have  
“ done in times past, will have precedence, if not an  
“ exclusive preference. These leading interests  
“ domineer, and have always domineered, over the  
“ whole. By this arrangement, the persons seduced  
“ are made dependent on their seducers ; honesty

“ (comparative honesty, at least) must become of the  
“ party of fraud, and must quit its proper character,  
“ and its just claims, to entitle itself to the alms of  
“ bribery and speculation.

“ But be these English creditors what they may,  
“ the creditors, most certainly not fraudulent, are the  
“ natives, who are numerous and wretched, indeed;  
“ by exhausting the whole revenues of the Carnatic,  
“ nothing is left for them. They lent *bonâ fide*; in  
“ all probability they were even forced to lend, or to  
“ give goods and service for the Nabob's obligations.  
“ They had no trusts to carry to his market. They  
“ had no faith of alliances to sell. They had no  
“ nations to betray to robbery and ruin. They had  
“ no lawful government seditiously to overturn; nor  
“ had they a governor, to whom it is owing that you  
“ exist in India, to deliver over to captivity, and to  
“ death in a shameful prison.”

He then proceeds to unfold the actual condition of the Carnatic, which he describes as an “abused, “insulted, racked, and ruined country.” It is a graphic description exposing the enormities which characterised the beginnings of British rule in India; and it contains that terrible word-picture of the horrors

of war to which we have alluded in our introductory remarks :—

“The great fortunes made in India in the beginnings of conquest naturally excited an emulation in all the parts, and through the whole succession of the Company’s service. But in the Company it gave rise to other sentiments. They did not find the new channels of acquisition flow with equal riches to them. On the contrary, the high flood-tide of private emolument was generally in the lowest ebb of their affairs. They began also to fear that the fortune of war might take away what the fortune of war had given. Wars were accordingly discouraged by repeated injunctions and menaces ; and that the servants might not be bribed into them by the native princes, they were strictly forbidden to take any money whatsoever from their hands. But vehement passion is ingenious in resources. The Company’s servants were not only stimulated, but better instructed, by the prohibition. They soon fell upon a contrivance which answered their purposes far better than the methods which were forbidden ; though in this also they violated an ancient, but they thought an abrogated, order. They reversed

“ their proceedings. Instead of receiving presents,  
“ they made loans. Instead of carrying on wars in  
“ their own name, they contrived an authority, at  
“ once irresistible and irresponsible, in whose name  
“ they might ravage at pleasure; and, being thus  
“ freed from all restraint, they indulged themselves  
“ in the most extravagant speculations of plunder.  
“ The cabal of creditors who have been the object of  
“ the late bountiful grant from his majesty’s ministers,  
“ in order to possess themselves, under the name of  
“ creditors and assignees, of every country in India,  
“ as fast as it should be conquered, inspired into the  
“ mind of the Nabob of Arcot (then a dependent on  
“ the Company of the humblest order) a scheme of  
“ the most wild and desperate ambition that I believe  
“ ever was admitted into the thoughts of a man so  
“ situated. First, they persuaded him to consider  
“ himself as a principal member in the political  
“ system of Europe. In the next place, they held  
“ out to him, and he readily imbibed, the idea of the  
“ general empire of Indostan. As a preliminary to  
“ this undertaking, they prevailed on him to propose  
“ a tripartite division of that vast country. One part  
“ to the Company; another to the Marattas; and the

“ third to himself. To himself he reserved all the  
“ southern part of the great peninsula, comprehended  
“ under the general name of the Deccan.

“ On this scheme of their servants, the Company  
“ was to appear in the Carnatic in no other light than  
“ as a contractor for the provision of armies, and the  
“ hire of mercenaries for his use, and under his direc-  
“ tion. This disposition was to be secured by the  
“ Nabob’s putting himself under the guarantee of  
“ France ; and, by the means of that rival nation,  
“ preventing the English for ever from assuming an  
“ equality, much less a superiority, in the Carnatic.  
“ In pursuance of this treasonable project (treasonable  
“ on the part of the English) they extinguished the  
“ Company as a sovereign power in that part of India ;  
“ they withdrew the Company’s garrisons out of all  
“ the forts and strongholds of the Carnatic ; they  
“ declined to receive the ambassadors from foreign  
“ courts, and remitted them to the Nabob of Arcot ;  
“ they fell upon and totally destroyed the oldest ally  
“ of the Company, the king of Tanjore, and plundered  
“ the country to the amount of near five millions  
“ sterling ; one after another, in the Nabob’s name, but  
“ with English force, they brought into a miserable

“servitude all the princes and great independent  
“nobility of a vast country. In proportion to these  
“treasons and violences, which ruined the people,  
“the fund of the Nabob’s debt grew and flourished.

“Among the victims to this magnificent plan of  
“universal plunder worthy of the heroic avarice of  
“the projectors, you have all heard (and he has made  
“himself to be well remembered) of an Indian chief  
“called Hyder Ali Khan. This man possessed the  
“western, as the Company under the name of the  
“Nabob of Arcot does the eastern, division of the  
“Carnatic. It was among the leading measures in  
“the design of this cabal (according to their own  
“emphatic language) to *extirpate* this Hyder Ali.  
“They declared the Nabob of Arcot to be his  
“sovereign, and himself to be a rebel, and publicly  
“invested their instrument with the sovereignty of  
“the kingdom of Mysore ; but their victim was not of  
“the passive kind. They were soon obliged to con-  
“clude a treaty of peace and close alliance with this  
“rebel at the gates of Madras. Both before and  
“since that treaty, every principle of policy pointed  
“out this power as a natural alliance, and on his  
“part it was courted by every sort of amicable office.

“ But the cabinet council of English creditors would  
“ not suffer their Nabob of Arcot to sign the treaty,  
“ nor even to give to a prince, at least his equal, the  
“ ordinary titles of respect and courtesy. From that  
“ time forward a continued plot was carried on within  
“ the divan, black and white, of the Nabob of Arcot,  
“ for the destruction of Hyder Ali. As to the outward  
“ members of the double, or rather treble, government  
“ of Madras, which had signed the treaty, they were  
“ always prevented by some overruling influence  
“ (which they do not describe, but which cannot be  
“ misunderstood) from performing what justice and  
“ interest combined so evidently to enforce.

“ When at length Hyder Ali found that he had to  
“ do with men who either would sign no convention,  
“ or whom no treaty and no signature could bind,  
“ and who were the determined enemies of human  
“ intercourse itself, he decreed to make the country  
“ possessed by these incorrigible and predestinated  
“ criminals a memorable example to mankind. He  
“ resolved, in the gloomy recesses of a mind capacious  
“ of such things, to leave the whole Carnatic an  
“ everlasting monument of vengeance, and to put  
“ perpetual desolation as a barrier between him and

“those, against whom the faith which holds the  
“moral elements of the world together was no pro-  
“tection. He became at length so confident of his  
“force, so collected in his might, that he made no  
“secret whatsoever of his dreadful resolution. Having  
“terminated his disputes with every enemy and every  
“rival, who buried their mutual animosities in their  
“common detestation against the creditors of the  
“Nabob of Arcot, he drew from every quarter whatever  
“a savage ferocity could add to his new rudiments in  
“the arts of destruction, and, compounding all the  
“materials of fury, havoc, and desolation into one  
“black cloud, he hung for a while on the declivities of  
“the mountains. While the authors of all these evils  
“were idly and stupidly gazing on this menacing  
“meteor which blackened all their horizon, it  
“suddenly burst and poured down the whole of its  
“contents upon the plains of the Carnatic. Then  
“ensued a scene of woe, the like of which no eye had  
“seen, no heart conceived, and which no tongue can  
“adequately tell. All the horrors of war before  
“known or heard of were mercy to that new havoc.  
“A storm of universal fire blasted every field, con-  
“sumed every house, destroyed every temple. The

“miserable inhabitants, flying from their flaming  
“villages, in part were slaughtered; others, without  
“regard to sex, to age, to the respect of rank, or  
“sacredness of function, fathers torn from children,  
“husbands from wives, enveloped in a whirlwind of  
“cavalry, and amid the goading spears of drivers  
“and the trampling of pursuing horses, were swept  
“into captivity in an unknown and hostile land.  
“Those who were able to evade this tempest fled to  
“the walled cities; but, escaping from fire, sword,  
“and exile, they fell into the jaws of famine.

“The alms of the settlement, in this dreadful  
“exigency, were certainly liberal; and all was done  
“by charity that private charity could do: but it was  
“a people in beggary; it was a nation which  
“stretched out its hands for food. For months  
“together these creatures of sufferance, whose very  
“excess and luxury, in their most plenteous days,  
“had fallen short of the allowance of our austere  
“fasts, silent, patient, resigned, without sedition or  
“disturbance, almost without complaint, perished by  
“an hundred a day in the streets of Madras; every  
“day seventy, at least, laid their bodies in the  
“streets, or on the glacis of Tanjore, and expired of

“famine in the granary of India. I was going to  
“awake your justice towards this unhappy part of  
“our fellow citizens by bringing before you some of  
“the circumstances of this plague of hunger. Of all  
“the calamities which beset and waylay the life of  
“man, this comes nearest to our heart, and is that  
“wherein the proudest of us all feels himself to be  
“nothing more than he is: but I find myself unable  
“to manage it with decorum; these details are of a  
“species of horror so nauseous and disgusting; they  
“are so degrading to the sufferers and to the  
“hearers; they are so humiliating to human nature  
“itself, that, on better thoughts, I find it more  
“advisable to throw a pall over this hideous object,  
“and to leave it to your general conceptions.

“For eighteen months, without intermission, this  
“destruction raged from the gates of Madras to the  
“gates of Tanjore; and so completely did these  
“masters in their art—Hyder Ali and his more  
“ferocious son—absolve themselves of their impious  
“vow that when the British armies traversed, as  
“they did, the Carnatic for hundreds of miles in all  
“directions, through the whole line of their march  
“they did not see one man, not one woman, not one

“ child, not one four-footed beast of any descrip-  
“ tion whatever. One dead, uniform silence reigned  
“ over the whole region. With the inconsiderable  
“ exceptions of the narrow vicinage of some new forts,  
“ I wish to be understood as speaking literally—I  
“ mean to produce to you more than three witnesses,  
“ above all exception, who will support this assertion  
“ in its full extent. That hurricane of war passed  
“ through every part of the central provinces of the  
“ Carnatic. Six or seven districts to the north and  
“ to the south (and these not wholly untouched)  
“ escaped the general ravage.

“ The Carnatic is a country not much inferior in  
“ extent to England. Figure to yourself, Mr.  
“ Speaker, the land in whose representative chair  
“ you sit; figure to yourself the form and fashion of  
“ your sweet and cheerful country from Thames to  
“ Trent, north and south, and from the Irish to the  
“ German Sea east and west, emptied and embowelled  
“ (may God avert the omen of our crimes !) by so  
“ accomplished a desolation. Extend your imagina-  
“ tion a little further, and then suppose your  
“ ministers taking a survey of this scene of waste and  
“ desolation; what would be your thoughts if you

“should be informed that they were computing how  
“much had been the amount of the excises, how  
“much the customs, how much the land and malt  
“tax, in order that they should charge (take it in the  
“most favourable light) for public service, upon the  
“relics of the satiated vengeance of relentless  
“enemies, the whole of what England had yielded  
“in the most exuberant seasons of peace and  
“abundance? What would you call it? To call it  
“tyranny sublimed into madness is the principle  
“upon which the ministers at your right hand  
“have proceeded in their estimate of the revenues  
“of the Carnatic, when they were providing, not  
“supply for the establishments of its protection, but  
“rewards for the authors of its ruin.”

Next he denounces the British Ministry in the following powerful invective:—

“What, Sir, would a virtuous and enlightened  
“ministry do on the view of the ruins of such works  
“before them? On the view of such a chasm of  
“desolation as that which yawned in the midst of  
“those countries to the north and south, which  
“still bore some vestiges of cultivation? They  
“would have reduced all their most necessary

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“ establishments; they would have suspended the  
“ justest payments; they would have employed every  
“ shilling derived from the producing to reanimate  
“ the powers of the unproductive parts. While they  
“ were performing this fundamental duty, while they  
“ were celebrating these mysteries of justice and  
“ humanity, they would have told the corps of  
“ fictitious creditors, whose crimes were their claims,  
“ that they must keep an awful distance; that they  
“ must silence their inauspicious tongues; that they  
“ must hold off their profane, unhallowed paws from  
“ this holy work; they would have proclaimed, with  
“ a voice that should make itself heard, that in every  
“ country the first creditor is the plough; that this  
“ original, indefeasible claim supersedes every other  
“ demand.

“ This is what a wise and virtuous ministry would  
“ have done and said. This, therefore, is what our  
“ minister could never think of saying or doing. A  
“ ministry of another kind would have first improved  
“ the country, and have thus laid a solid foundation  
“ for future opulence and future force. But on this  
“ grand point of the restoration of the country there  
“ is not one syllable to be found in the correspondence

“of our ministers, from the first to the last;  
“they felt nothing for a land desolated by fire,  
“sword, and famine; their sympathies took another  
“direction; they were touched with pity for bribery  
“so long tormented with a fruitless itching of its  
“palms; their bowels yearned for usury that had  
“long missed the harvest of its returning months;\*  
“they felt for speculation which had been for so  
“many years raking in the dust of an empty  
“treasury; they were melted into compassion for  
“rapine and oppression, licking their dry, parched,  
“unbloody jaws. These were the necessities for  
“which they were studious to provide.”

After stating that he protested against the preference given to “fictitious private debts over the  
“standing defence and the standing government,” he proceeds:—

“But my principal objection lies a good deal  
“deeper. That debt to the Company is the pretext  
“under which all the other debts lurk and cover  
“themselves. That debt forms the foul putrid  
“mucus, in which are engendered the whole brood

\* Interest was rated in India by the month.

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“ of creeping ascarides, all the endless involutions,  
“ the eternal knot, added to a knot of those inex-  
“ pugnable tape-worms which devour the nutriment  
“ and eat up the bowels of India. It is necessary,  
“ Sir, you should recollect two things : first, that the  
“ Nabob’s debt to the Company carries no interest.  
“ In the next place you will observe that, whenever  
“ the Company has occasion to borrow, she has  
“ always commanded whatever she thought fit at  
“ eight per cent. Carrying in your mind these two  
“ facts, attend to the process with regard to the  
“ public and private debt, and with what little  
“ appearance of decency they play into each other’s  
“ hands a game of utter perdition to the unhappy  
“ natives of India. The Nabob falls into an arrear to  
“ the Company. The presidency presses for payment.  
“ The Nabob’s answer is, I have no money. Good.  
“ But there are soucars who will supply you on the  
“ mortgage of your territories. Then steps forward  
“ some Paul Benfield, and from his grateful com-  
“ passion to the Nabob, and his filial regard to the  
“ Company, he unlocks the treasures of his virtuous  
“ industry, and, for a consideration of twenty-four or  
“ thirty-six per cent. on a mortgage of the territorial

“revenue, becomes security to the Company for the  
“Nabob’s arrears.

. . . . .

“In consequence of this double game, all the terri-  
“torial revenues have, at one time or other, been  
“covered by these locusts, the English soucars. Not  
“one single foot of the Carnatic has escaped them,  
“a territory as large as England. During these  
“operations, what a scene has that country pre-  
“sented! The usurious European assignee super-  
“sedes the Nabob’s native farmer of the revenue, the  
“farmer flies to the Nabob’s presence to claim his  
“bargain, while his servants murmur for wages and  
“his soldiers mutiny for pay. The mortgage to the  
“European assignee is then resumed, and the native  
“farmer replaced—replaced, again to be removed on  
“the new clamour of the European assignee. Every  
“man of rank and landed fortune being long since  
“extinguished, the remaining miserable last culti-  
“vator, who grows to the soil, after having his back  
“scored by the farmer, has it again flayed by the  
“whip of the assignee, and is thus by a ravenous,  
“because a short-lived, succession of claimants  
“lashed from oppressor to oppressor, while a single

“drop of blood is left as the means of extorting a  
“single grain of corn. Do not think I paint. Far,  
“very far from it. I do not reach the fact, nor  
“approach to it. Men of respectable condition, men  
“equal to your substantial English yeomen, are daily  
“tied up and scourged to answer the multiplied  
“demands of various contending and contradictory  
“titles, all issuing from one and the same source.  
“Tyrannous exaction brings on servile concealment,  
“and that again calls forth tyrannous coercion.  
“They move in a circle, mutually producing and  
“produced, till at length nothing of humanity is left  
“in the Government, no trace of integrity, spirit, or  
“manliness in the people, who drag out a precarious  
“and degraded existence under this system of outrage  
“upon human nature. Such is the effect of the  
“establishment of a debt to the Company, as it has  
“hitherto been managed, and as it ever will remain,  
“until ideas are adopted totally different from those  
“which prevail at this time.”

He next deals with the condition of Tanjore, which he shows to be as deplorable as that of the Carnatic, and then applies the lash of his invective to Paul Benfield and his confederates, and exposes the

connection which existed between them and the Cabinet :—

“ Our wonderful minister, as you all know, formed  
“ a new plan, a plan *insigne recens indictum ore alio*,  
“ a plan for supporting the freedom of our consti-  
“ tution by court intrigues, and for removing its  
“ corruptions by Indian delinquency. To carry that  
“ bold paradoxical design into execution, sufficient  
“ funds and apt instruments became necessary. You  
“ are perfectly sensible that a parliamentary reform  
“ occupies his thoughts day and night as an essential  
“ member in this extraordinary project. In his  
“ anxious researches upon this subject, natural  
“ instinct, as well as sound policy, would direct his  
“ eyes, and settle his choice on Paul Benfield. Paul  
“ Benfield is the grand parliamentary reformer, the  
“ reformer to whom the whole choir of reformers bow,  
“ and to whom even the right honourable gentleman  
“ himself must yield the palm : for what region in the  
“ empire, what city, what borough, what county, what  
“ tribunal in this kingdom, is not full of his labours ?  
“ Others have been only speculators—he is the grand  
“ practical reformer ; and while the chancellor of the  
“ exchequer pledges in vain the man and the minister

“to increase the provincial members, Mr. Benfield  
“has auspiciously and practically begun it. Leaving  
“far behind him even Lord Camelford’s generous  
“design of bestowing Old Sarum on the Bank of  
“England, Mr. Benfield has thrown in the borough  
“of Cricklade to reinforce the county representation.  
“Not content with this, in order to station a steady  
“phalanx for all future reforms, this public-spirited  
“usurer, amid his charitable toils for the relief of  
“India, did not forget the poor rotten constitution  
“of his native country. For her he did not disdain  
“to stoop to the trade of a wholesale upholsterer for  
“this house, to furnish it, not with the faded tapestry  
“figures of antiquated merit such as decorate and  
“may reproach some other houses, but with real  
“solid living patterns of true modern virtue.  
“Paul Benfield made (reckoning himself) no fewer  
“than eight members in the last parliament.  
“What copious streams of pure blood must he  
“not have transfused into the veins of the  
“present!”

Then he takes in hand Atkinson, Benfield’s attorney, and recites the distinctions which were showered upon him, in gratitude for the services he rendered

to the Government party when his principal had returned to India:—

“Every trust, every honour, every distinction was  
“to be heaped upon him. He was at once made a  
“director of the India company; made an alderman  
“of London; and to be made, if ministry could  
“prevail (and I am sorry to say how near, how very  
“near they were prevailing), representative of the  
“capital of this kingdom. But to secure his services  
“against all risk, he was brought in for a ministerial  
“borough. On his part, he was not wanting in zeal  
“for the common cause. His advertisements show  
“his motives, and the merits upon which he stood.  
“For your minister, this worn-out veteran submitted  
“to enter into the dusty field of the London contest;  
“and you all remember that in the same virtuous  
“cause he submitted to keep a sort of public office  
“or counting-house, where the whole business of the  
“last general election was managed. It was openly  
“managed by the direct agent and attorney of  
“Benfield. It was managed upon India principles,  
“and for an Indian interest. This was the golden  
“cup of abominations; this the chalice of the forni-  
“cations of rapine, usury, and oppression, which was

“ held out by the gorgeous eastern harlot; which so  
“ many of the people, so many of the nobles of this  
“ land, had drained to the very dregs. Do you think  
“ that no reckoning was to follow this lewd debauch?  
“ that no payment was to be demanded for this riot  
“ of public drunkenness and national prostitution?  
“ Here! you have it here before you. The principal  
“ of the grand election manager must be indemnified;  
“ accordingly, the claims of Benfield and his crew  
“ must be put above all inquiry.

. . . . .

“ Here is a specimen of the new and pure aristo-  
“ cracy created by the right honourable gentleman  
“ [Mr. Pitt] as the support of the crown and consti-  
“ tution, against the old, corrupt, refractory, natural  
“ interests of this kingdom; and this is the grand  
“ counterpoise against all odious coalitions of these  
“ interests. A single Benfield outweighs them all; a  
“ criminal, who long since ought to have fattened the  
“ region kites with his offal, is, by his majesty’s  
“ ministers, enthroned in the government of a great  
“ kingdom, and enfeoffed with an estate, which in the  
“ comparison effaces the splendour of all the nobility  
“ of Europe.”

He then sums up as follows the general purport of his speech :—

“ I have thus laid before you, Mr. Speaker, I think ✓  
“ with sufficient clearness, the connection of the  
“ ministers with Mr. Atkinson at the general election ;  
“ I have laid open to you the connection of Atkinson  
“ with Benfield ; I have shown Benfield’s employment  
“ of his wealth, in creating a parliamentary interest,  
“ to procure a ministerial protection ; I have set  
“ before your eyes his large concern in the debt, his  
“ practices to hide that concern from the public eye,  
“ and the liberal protection which he has received  
“ from the minister. If this chain of circumstances  
“ does not lead you necessarily to conclude that the  
“ minister has paid to the avarice of Benfield the  
“ services done by Benfield’s connections to his  
“ ambition, I do not know anything short of the  
“ confession of the party that can persuade you of his  
“ guilt. Clandestine and collusive practice can only  
“ be traced by combination and comparison of circum-  
“ stances. To reject such combination and com-  
“ parison is to reject the only means of detecting  
“ fraud ; it is, indeed, to give it a patent and free  
“ licence to cheat with impunity.

. . . . .

The speech concludes with the following peroration :—

“ The debate has been long, and as much so on my  
“ part, at least, as on the part of those who have  
“ spoken before me. But, long as it is, the more  
“ material half of the subject has hardly been  
“ touched on—that is, the corrupt and destructive  
“ system to which this debt has been rendered sub-  
“ servient, and which seems to be pursued with at  
“ least as much vigour and regularity as ever. If I  
“ considered your ease or my own, rather than the  
“ weight and importance of this question, I ought to  
“ make some apology to you, perhaps some apology  
“ to myself, for having detained your attention so  
“ long. I know on what ground I tread. This  
“ subject, at one time taken up with so much fervour  
“ and zeal, is no longer a favourite in this House.  
“ The House itself has undergone a great and signal  
“ revolution. To some the subject is strange and  
“ uncouth; to several harsh and distasteful; to the  
“ reliques of the last Parliament it is a matter of fear  
“ and apprehension. It is natural for those who have

“ seen their friends sink in the tornado which raged  
“ during the last shift of the monsoon, and have  
“ hardly escaped on the planks of the general wreck—  
“ it is but too natural for them, as soon as they make  
“ the rocks and quicksands of their former disasters,  
“ to put about their new-built barks, and, as much as  
“ possible, to keep aloof from this perilous lee shore.

“ But let us do what we please to put India from  
“ our thoughts, we can do nothing to separate it from  
“ our public interest and our national reputation.  
“ Our attempts to banish this importunate duty will  
“ only make it return upon us again and again, and  
“ every time in a shape more unpleasant than the  
“ former. A Government has been fabricated for ✓  
“ that great province; the right honourable gentle-  
“ man says that, therefore, you ought not to examine  
“ into its conduct. Heavens! what an argument is  
“ this! We are not to examine into the conduct of  
“ the direction, because it is an old Government; we  
“ are not to examine into this board of control, because  
“ it is a new one. Then we are only to examine into  
“ the conduct of those who have no conduct to account  
“ for. Unfortunately, the basis of this new Govern-  
“ ment has been laid on old condemned delinquents,

“ and its superstructure is raised out of prosecutors  
“ turned into protectors. The event has been such  
“ as might be expected. But if it had been otherwise  
“ constituted, had it been constituted even as I wished,  
“ and as the mover of this question had planned, the  
“ better part of the proposed establishment was in  
“ the publicity of its proceedings; in its perpetual  
“ responsibility to Parliament. Without this check,  
“ what is our Government at home, even awed, as  
“ every European Government is, by an audience  
“ formed of the other States of Europe, by the  
“ applause or condemnation of the discerning and  
“ critical company before which it acts? But if the  
“ scene on the other side of the globe, which tempts,  
“ invites, almost compels to tyranny and rapine, be  
“ not inspected with the eye of a severe and unremit-  
“ ting vigilance, shame and destruction must ensue.  
“ For one, the worst event of this day, though it may  
“ deject, shall not break or subdue me. The call  
“ upon us is authoritative. Let who will shrink back,  
“ I shall be found at my post. Baffled, discoun-  
“ tenanced, subdued, discredited, as the cause of  
“ justice and humanity is, it will be only the dearer  
“ to me. Whoever, therefore, shall at any time bring

“before you any thing towards the relief of our  
“distressed fellow-citizens in India, and towards a  
“subversion of the present most corrupt and oppres-  
“sive system for its government, in me shall find a  
“weak, I am afraid, but a steady, earnest, and  
“faithful assistant.”

Previously to the above deliverance, on Decem-✓  
ber 1st, 1783, when Burke was Paymaster of the  
Forces, he had made a great speech on the measure  
to regulate the Government of India, known as Fox's  
East India Bill, but which was of course Burke's  
handiwork. In this oration he criticises the constitu-✓  
tion of the East India Company, and denies its claim  
to defend its malpractices on the ground of the right  
conferred by its parliamentary charter. He says:—

“I therefore freely admit to the East India Com-  
“pany their claim to exclude their fellow-subjects  
“from the commerce of half the globe. I admit their  
“claim to administer an annual territorial revenue  
“of seven millions sterling; to command an army  
“of sixty thousand men; and to dispose (under the  
“control of a sovereign imperial discretion, and with  
“the due observance of the natural and local law)  
“of the lives and fortunes of thirty millions of their

“ fellow-creatures. All this they possess by charter  
“ and by Acts of Parliament (in my opinion) without  
“ a shadow of controversy.

“ Those who carry the rights and claims of the  
“ Company the furthest do not contend for more than  
“ this ; and all this I freely grant. But granting all  
“ this, they must grant to me in my turn that all  
“ political power which is set over men, and that all  
“ privilege claimed or exercised in exclusion of them,  
“ being wholly artificial, and for so much a derogation  
“ from the natural equality of mankind at large, ought  
“ to be some way or other exercised ultimately for  
“ their benefit.

“ If this is true with regard to every species of  
“ political dominion and every description of com-  
“ mercial privilege, none of which can be original  
“ self-derived rights, or grants for the mere private  
“ benefit of the holders, then such rights, or privi-  
“ leges, or whatever else you choose to call them, are  
“ all in the strictest sense a *trust* ; and it is of the  
“ very essence of every trust to be rendered account-  
“ able ; and even totally to *cease* when it substantially  
“ varies from the purposes for which alone it could  
“ have a lawful existence.

“ This I conceive, Sir, to be true of trusts of power  
“ vested in the highest hands, and of such as seem to  
“ hold of no human creature. But about the applica-  
“ tion of this principle to subordinate *derivative* trusts,  
“ I do not see how a controversy can be maintained.  
“ To whom, then, would I make the East India Com- ✓  
“ pany accountable? Why, to Parliament, to be  
“ sure; to Parliament, from whom their trust was  
“ derived; to Parliament, which alone is capable of  
“ comprehending the magnitude of its object and its  
“ abuse, and alone capable of an effectual legislative  
“ remedy. The very charter, which is held out to  
“ exclude Parliament from correcting malversation  
“ with regard to the high trust vested in the Company,  
“ is the very thing which at once gives a title and  
“ imposes a duty on us to interfere with effect, when-  
“ ever power and authority originating from ourselves  
“ are perverted from their purposes, and become  
“ instruments of wrong and violence.

“ If Parliament, Sir, had nothing to do with this  
“ charter, we might have some sort of Epicurean  
“ excuse to stand aloof, indifferent spectators of what  
“ passes in the Company's name in India and in  
“ London. But if we are the very cause of the evil,

“ we are in a special manner engaged to the redress ;  
“ and for us passively to bear with oppressions  
“ committed under the sanction of our own authority  
“ is in truth and reason for this House to be an active  
“ accomplice in the abuse.

“ That the power notoriously, grossly abused has  
“ been bought from us is very certain. But this  
“ circumstance, which is urged against the Bill,  
“ becomes an additional motive for our interference,  
“ lest we should be thought to have sold the blood of  
“ millions of men for the base consideration of  
“ money. We sold, I admit, all that we had to sell—  
“ that is, our authority, not our control. We had not  
“ a right to make a market of our duties.

“ I ground myself, therefore, on this principle :  
“ that if the abuse is proved, the contract is broken,  
“ and we re-enter into all our rights—that is, into the  
“ exercise of all our duties. Our own authority is  
“ indeed as much a trust originally as the Company’s  
“ authority is a trust derivatively ; and it is the use  
“ we make of the resumed power that must justify or  
“ condemn us in the resumption of it. When we  
“ have perfected the plan laid before us by the right  
“ honourable mover, the world will then see what it

“is we destroy and what it is we create. By that  
“test we stand or fall; and by that test I trust that  
“it will be found in the issue that we are going to  
“supersede a charter abused to the full extent of all  
“the powers which it could abuse and exercised in  
“the plenitude of despotism, tyranny, and corrup-  
“tion, and that in one and the same plan we provide  
“a real chartered security for the *rights of men*  
“cruelly violated under that charter.”

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Following the plan adopted by him in his speech on conciliation with America, he describes in detail the physical, ethnological, political, social, and religious conditions of Hindostan, and proceeds to enlarge on the flagrant violations of its trust committed by the East India Company. Then he gives ✓ the following powerful description of the disastrous consequences of the English government of India as then carried on, and of the people who were conducting it:—

“The several irruptions of Arabs, Tartars, and  
“Persians into India were, for the greater part,  
“ferocious, bloody, and wasteful in the extreme;  
“our entrance into the dominion of that country was,  
“as generally, with small comparative effusion of

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“ blood, being introduced by various frauds and  
“ delusions, and by taking advantage of the incurable,  
“ blind, and senseless animosity which the several  
“ country powers bear towards each other rather than  
“ by open force. But the difference in favour of the  
“ first conquerors is this: the Asiatic conquerors  
“ very soon abated of their ferocity, because they  
“ made the conquered country their own. They rose  
“ or fell with the rise or fall of the territory they  
“ lived in. Fathers there deposited the hopes of  
“ their posterity; and children there beheld the  
“ monuments of their fathers. Here their lot was  
“ finally cast; and it is the natural wish of all that  
“ their lot should not be cast in a bad land.  
“ Poverty, sterility, and desolation are not a recreat-  
“ ing prospect to the eye of man, and there  
“ are very few who can bear to grow old among  
“ the curses of a whole people. If their passion or  
“ their avarice drove the Tartar lords to acts of  
“ rapacity or tyranny, there was time enough, even  
“ in the short life of man, to bring round the ill-  
“ effects of an abuse of power upon the power itself.  
“ If hoards were made by violence and tyranny, they  
“ were still domestic hoards; the domestic profusion,

“ or the rapine of a more powerful and prodigal hand,  
“ restored them to the people. With many disorders,  
“ and with few political checks upon power, nature  
“ had still fair play ; the sources of acquisition were  
“ not dried up, and therefore the trade, the manufac-  
“ tures, and the commerce of the country flourished.  
“ Even avarice and usury itself operated, both for the  
“ preservation and the employment of national  
“ wealth. The husbandman and manufacturer paid  
“ heavy interest, but then they augmented the fund  
“ from whence they were again to borrow. Their  
“ resources were dearly bought, but they were sure ;  
“ and the general stock of the community grew by the  
“ general effort.

“ But under the English government all this order  
“ is reversed. The Tartar invasion was mischievous,  
“ but it is our protection that destroys India. It was  
“ their enmity, but it is our friendship. Our con-  
“ quest there, after twenty years, is as crude as it was  
“ the first day. The natives scarcely know what it is  
“ to see the grey head of an Englishman. Young  
“ men (boys almost) govern there, without society,  
“ and without sympathy with the natives. They have  
“ no more social habits with the people than if they

“ still resided in England ; nor, indeed, any species  
“ of intercourse but that which is necessary to make  
“ a sudden fortune, with a view to remote settlement.  
“ Animated with all the avarice of age and all the  
“ impetuosity of youth, they roll in one after another,  
“ wave after wave, and there is nothing before the  
“ eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect  
“ of new flights of birds of prey and passage, with  
“ appetites continually renewing for a food that is  
“ continually wasting. Every rupee of profit made  
“ by an Englishman is lost for ever to India. With  
“ us are no retributory superstitions by which a  
“ foundation of charity compensates, through ages,  
“ to the poor, for the rapine and injustice of a day.  
“ With us no pride erects stately monuments which  
“ repair the mischiefs which pride had produced, and  
“ which adorn a country out of its own spoils.  
“ England has erected no churches, no hospitals, no  
“ palaces, no schools ; England has built no bridges,  
“ made no high roads, cut no navigations, dug out no  
“ reservoirs. Every other conqueror of every other  
“ description has left some monument, either of state  
“ or beneficence, behind him. Were we to be driven  
“ out of India this day, nothing would remain to tell

“ that it had been possessed, during the inglorious  
“ period of our dominion, by anything better than the  
“ ourang-outang or the tiger.

“ There is nothing in the boys we send to India  
“ worse than in the boys whom we are whipping at  
“ school, or that we see trailing a pike, or bending  
“ over a desk at home. But as English youth in  
“ India drink the intoxicating draught of authority  
“ and dominion before their heads are able to bear it,  
“ and as they are full grown in fortune long before  
“ they are ripe in principle, neither nature nor reason  
“ has any opportunity to exert itself for remedy  
“ of the excesses of their premature power. The  
“ consequences of their conduct, which in good minds  
“ (and many of theirs are probably such) might pro-  
“ duce penitence or amendment, are unable to pursue  
“ the rapidity of their flight. Their prey is lodged in  
“ England, and the cries of India are given to seas  
“ and winds to be blown about, in every breaking up  
“ of the monsoon, over a remote and unhearing ocean.  
“ In India all the vices operate by which sudden  
“ fortune is acquired ; in England are often displayed  
“ by the same persons the virtues which dispense  
“ hereditary wealth. Arrived in England, the

“destroyers of the nobility and gentry of a  
“whole kingdom will find the best company in  
“this nation, at a board of elegance and hospi-  
“tality. Here the manufacturer and husbandman  
“will bless the just and punctual hand that in  
“India has torn the cloth from the loom, or  
“wrested the scanty portion of rice and salt from  
“the peasant of Bengal, or wrung from him the  
“very opium in which he forgot his oppressions  
“and his oppressor. They marry into your families;  
“they enter into your senate; they ease your estates  
“by loans; they raise their value by demand; they  
“cherish and protect your relations which lie heavy  
“on your patronage, and there is scarcely a house in  
“the kingdom that does not feel some concern and  
“interest that makes all reform of our eastern  
“government appear officious and disgusting, and, on  
“the whole, a most discouraging attempt. In such  
“an attempt you hurt those who are able to return  
“kindness or to resent injury. If you succeed, you  
“save those who cannot so much as give you thanks.  
“All these things show the difficulty of the work we  
“have on hand; but they show its necessity too.  
“Our Indian government is in its best state a

“grievance. It is necessary that the correctives  
“should be uncommonly vigorous, and the work of  
“men sanguine, warm, and even impassioned in the  
“cause. But it is an arduous thing to plead against  
“abuses of a power which originates from your own  
“country, and affects those whom we are used to  
“consider as strangers.”

He next deals with Hastings' treatment of the ✓  
Nabob of Oude, and of the Rohillas, and describes  
the spoliation of the Begums of Oude, and of the  
Rajah of Benares, showing a consummate knowledge  
of the minutiae of Indian political, religious, and  
social organisation nothing short of marvellous. He ✓  
then proceeds:—

“I therefore conclude, what you all conclude, that  
“this body, being totally perverted from the purposes  
“of its institution, is utterly incorrigible; and  
“because they are incorrigible, both in conduct and  
“constitution, power ought to be taken out of their  
“hands; just on the same principles on which have  
“been made all the just changes and revolutions of  
“government that have taken place since the begin-  
“ning of the world.”

Next he defends the proposals of the Bill against

the objections raised by the Opposition, and concludes as follows :—

“ It has been said, if you violate this charter, what  
“ security has the charter of the bank, in which  
“ public credit is so deeply concerned, and even the  
“ charter of London, in which the rights of so many  
“ subjects are involved? I answer: In the like case  
“ they have no security at all. No; no security at  
✓ “ all. If the bank should, by every species of mis-  
“ management, fall into a state similar to that of the  
“ East India Company; if it should be oppressed  
“ with demands it could not answer, engagements  
“ which it could not perform, and with bills for  
“ which it could not procure payment; no charter  
“ should protect the mismanagement from correction,  
“ and such public grievances from redress. If the  
“ city of London had the means and will of destroying  
“ an empire, and of cruelly oppressing and tyrannising  
“ over millions of men as good as themselves,  
“ the charter of the city of London should prove no  
“ sanction to such tyranny and such oppression.  
✓ “ Charters are kept when their purposes are main-  
“ tained; they are violated when the privilege is  
“ supported against its end and its object.

“Now, Sir, I have finished all I proposed to say as  
“my reasons for giving my vote to this Bill. If I am  
“wrong, it is not for want of pains to know what is  
“right. This pledge, at least, of my rectitude I have  
“given to my country.

. . . . .

“For my own part, I am happy that I have lived  
“to see this day; I feel myself overpaid for the  
“labours of eighteen years, when, at this late period,  
“I am able to take my share, by one humble vote, in  
“destroying a tyranny that exists to the disgrace of  
“this nation, and the destruction of so large a part of  
“the human species.”

Burke having, to use his own words, “wound him-✓  
“self into the inmost recesses and labyrinths of the  
“Indian detail,” resolved to take action, beyond  
denunciatory speeches in Parliament, against the  
arch delinquent. In the spring of 1786 he moved for ✓  
papers on the subject, and Pitt’s Ministry subsequently  
agreed to the impeachment of Hastings. The trial  
commenced in Westminster Hall before the assembled  
Peers on February 13th, 1788. The first two days  
were occupied in reading the articles of impeachment  
and the answers of the accused. On the third day

✓ Burke began his general opening of the case for the prosecution, the galleries being crowded to overflowing by an excited public, eager to hear the most famous orator of the day in a case which had created such universal interest, and had divided society into two bitterly hostile camps.

✓ This opening speech of Burke's is a wonderful example of the wide range of his powers. It differs entirely in manner and method from his Parliamentary utterances, and proves that, had he continued in the profession he originally adopted, he would have been one of the greatest advocates that ever adorned the English bar.

✓ He commences with a skilful and admirably conceived tribute to the justice and impartiality of their lordships as a tribunal, and then goes on to describe the crime, the criminal, and the evidence in the following words:—

“My lords, in the next place, I observe, with  
“respect to the crime which we chose. We chose  
“one which we contemplated in its nature with  
“all its circumstances, with all its extensions,  
“and with all its aggravations; and, on that  
“review, we are bold to say that the crimes

“ with which we charge the prisoner are substantial  
“ crimes; that they are no errors or mistakes, such  
“ as wise and good men might possibly fall into—  
“ they are crimes—truly, and properly, and emphati-  
“ cally crimes. The Commons are too liberal not to  
“ allow for the difficulties of a great and arduous  
“ public situation. They know too well that domi-  
“ neering necessities will occur in particular situa-  
“ tions. They know that particular situations will  
“ not give the mind time to have recourse to fixed  
“ principles, but that it is made frequently to decide  
“ in a manner that calmer reason would certainly  
“ have rejected. We know that, as we are to be  
“ served by men, the persons who serve us must be  
“ tried as men; and that there is a very large allow-  
“ ance, indeed, due to human infirmity and human  
“ error. This we know, and have weighed before we  
“ came to your lordships’ bar. But the crimes we  
“ charge are not the crimes and effects of common  
“ human nature and frailty, such as we know and feel  
“ and can allow for; they are crimes which have their  
“ rise in the wicked dispositions of men; they are  
“ crimes which have their rise in avarice, rapacity,  
“ pride, cruelty, ferocity, malignity of temper,

“haughtiness, insolence ; in short, in everything that  
“manifests a heart blackened to the very blackest, a  
“heart dyed deep in blackness, a heart gangreened  
“to the very core. If we do not plant our crimes in  
“those vices which the breast of man is made to  
“abhor, we desire no longer to be heard on this  
“occasion. Let everything be pleaded that can be  
“pleaded on the score of error and infirmity ; we give  
“up the whole ; we stand on crimes of deliberation ;  
“we charge him with nothing that he did not commit  
“against remonstrances ; we charge him with nothing  
“that he did not commit against command ; we  
“charge him with nothing that he did not commit  
“contrary to the advice, contrary to the admonition  
“and reprimand of those who were authorised by the  
“laws to reprove and reprimand him. They were  
“crimes not against morals, but against those eternal  
“laws of justice which you are assembled here to  
“assert. They were not in formal and technical  
“language, but in real and absolute effect, high  
“crimes and misdemeanours.

“So far as to the crime. Now as to the criminal.  
“We have not chosen to bring before you a poor,  
“puny, trembling delinquent, misled, perhaps, by

“ the faction of those that ought to have kept him in  
“ awe, and oppressed afterwards by their power in  
“ order to make his punishment the means of screen-  
“ ing higher delinquents. We have not chosen to  
“ bring before your lordships one of those obscure  
“ offenders in other situations, whose insignificance  
“ and weakness, weighed against the public prosecu-  
“ tion, give it something like the nature of oppression ;  
“ but we have brought before your lordships the first  
“ man in property and power ; we have brought  
“ before you the head, the chief, the captain-general  
“ in iniquity—one in whom all the frauds, all the  
“ speculations, all the tyranny in India are embodied,  
“ disciplined, and arrayed. Then, if we have brought  
“ before you such a person, if you strike at him, you  
“ will not have need of a great many more examples  
“ —you strike at the whole corps if you strike at the  
“ head.

“ Now, my Lords, a few words relative to the  
“ evidence that we have brought to support such a  
“ charge, which, we think, will be equal to the charge  
“ itself. It is evidence of record—of weighty, official,  
“ authentic record—that is, made up of papers signed  
“ by the hand of the criminal himself ; it is made up

“ of his own letters, authenticated by his own hands ;  
“ it is made up of numbers of witnesses—oral, living  
“ witnesses—competent to speak to the points to  
“ which they are brought; and I trust that the  
“ evidence will be found such as cannot give you the  
“ least doubt in your minds of the facts; and when  
“ you consider them, when the facts are proved, I  
“ believe, from their nature and effects, you can have  
“ no doubt of their criminality.”

✓ Burke's opening speech extended over six days.  
During its course he opened the various charges generally. The following passages will afford some idea of its power and eloquence :—

✓ AVARICE AND GREED THE KEY OF HASTINGS' POLICY.

“ An arbitrary system must always be a corrupt  
“ one. There never was a man who thought he had  
“ no law but his own will, who did not also find that  
“ he had no ends but his own profit. We say that  
“ Mr. Hastings governed corruptly—that is to say,  
“ that he gave and received bribes, and formed a  
“ system for that purpose. We say that he did not  
“ only receive and give bribes accidentally without  
“ any scheme or design, merely as the opportunity or

“ the importunity of temptation incited, but that he  
“ formed schemes and plans of government for that  
“ very purpose. This system is such a one, I believe,  
“ as the British nation, in particular, will disown ;  
“ for if any one thing distinguishes this nation  
“ eminently above another, it is the dignity attached  
“ to its offices, from this, that there is less taint of  
“ corruption in them ; so that he who would, in any  
“ part of these dominions, set up a system of corrup-  
“ tion, and attempts to justify it on the score of  
“ utility, that man is staining, not only the general  
“ nature and character of office, but he is staining the  
“ peculiar and distinguishing glory of this country.  
“ My Lords, I shall show that in his judicial and  
“ official character Mr. Hastings has stained it.  
“ There are, undoubtedly, many things in Govern-  
“ ments that make them fearful and odious ; but  
“ bribery, peculation, and guilty hands are things  
“ that have always been denominated low, base, and  
“ contemptible. It is certain that even tyranny itself  
“ may find some specious colour, and may appear  
“ even as a more secure and rigid execution of justice ;  
“ religious persecution may shade itself under the  
“ guise of a mistaken and over-zealous piety ;

“ conquest may cover itself with its own laurels, and  
“ induce a man to imagine that future benefits will  
“ make amends for the present exigency ; but nothing  
“ can excuse money : there is pollution in the touch.  
“ There is pollution in that Government which makes  
“ nothing but money its object. What are the merits  
“ which Mr. Hastings has pleaded ? That he cor-  
“ rected the abuses or prevented the evils of an  
“ arbitrary Government ? No such thing. What he  
“ contends for is, that he squeezed more money out  
“ of the inhabitants of the country than any other  
“ man could by any other means have done. These,  
“ my Lords, are his merits ; his very merits are  
“ nothing but merits of money ; money got by  
“ oppression ; money got by extortion ; money got by  
“ violence, from the poor or from the rich. There is  
“ breach of faith, cruelty, perfidy ; yet the great  
“ ruling principle of the whole is money. His acts  
“ are acts, and his Government a Government, of  
“ money. It is base avarice which never can look,  
“ by any prejudice of mankind, anything like virtue.  
“ To his employers, the Company, he says : You have  
“ got a large sum of money from the people, and you  
“ may leave them to be governed as they can. If he

“ has at any time taken any money from the inhabitants of the country, he does not pretend he has increased their zeal and their affection for your cause, or made their subjection more complete. Very far from it. In short, money is the beginning, money is the middle, and money is the end of his Government.” ✓

Burke next describes the means adopted by Hastings to carry out this policy of plunder, and the tools he employed for the purpose. In 1773 the Governor General had established six provincial councils for the collection and management of the revenues, and in 1775 he had recommended their continuance to the Court of Directors of the East India Company. In 1776 he despatched to the Court a plan for the better administration of justice, and in that plan he had specially provided for the permanence of these provincial councils, and even recommended that Parliamentary sanction should be obtained for their establishment. In 1781, however, he suddenly ✓ abolished them, and replaced them with one single council, under which was placed the administration of the whole revenue of the kingdoms of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa.

After stating these facts, Burke continues as follows:—

“ This new Council he composed entirely of his own  
“ creatures and favourites ; but, as it was necessary  
“ that these gentlemen should have for their dewan or  
“ secretary some native acquainted with the laws  
“ and customs of the country, a person who could  
“ communicate between them and the country Govern-  
“ ment, such an agent was given to them by Mr.  
“ Hastings—a man that you will often hear of—a  
“ name at the sound of which all India turns pale,  
“ the most wicked, the most atrocious, the boldest,  
“ and most dexterous villain that that country ever  
“ produced. There never was a friend—there never  
“ was a foe of Mr. Hastings—there never was a  
“ human being that differed in their opinion of  
“ Gunga Govind Sing, the friend of Mr. Hastings,  
“ to whom all the authority below and all the  
“ authority above was delegated. I hope and trust  
“ your Lordships will allow me to state, from the  
“ report of the Council themselves, the nature and  
“ importance of this office of secretary. My Lords,  
“ they assert that the whole power—a power of the  
“ most alarming and terrible nature—centred in this

“man, and that the Council, with the best abilities  
“and intentions, were, after all, little better than  
“tools in the hands of their dewan. He pried into  
“the secrets of families; he availed himself of the  
“knowledge of those secrets; and he thereby had it  
“in his power to lay the whole country under  
“contribution. Now, my Lords, you have here the  
“opinion of the Council itself; you see what they  
“are made for; you see the executive power was  
“destroyed; you see that the delegation by Mr.  
“Hastings of all the English authority, both above  
“and below, judicial and civil, was given to this  
“Gunga Govind Sing. The screen he put before the  
“public, the veil was thrown open, and Mr. Hastings  
“uses the names and authority of the English to  
“make them tools in the hands of the basest,  
“wickedest, corruptest, the most atrocious villain  
“that ever was heard of. My Lords, you have heard  
“that the provincial councils were destroyed. Did  
“Mr. Hastings pretend to say that he destroyed them  
“for their corruption or insufficiency? No such  
“thing. He declares he has no objection to their  
“competency, no charge to make against their  
“conduct. The provincial councils were then

“ destroyed ; forty English gentlemen were removed ;  
“ the whole administration of the country was over-  
“ turned ; the East India Company were burdened  
“ with pensions for the persons dismissed, and with  
“ £62,000 per annum for the newly-appointed  
“ council, and all for the purpose of establishing  
“ Mr. Hastings’ friend, Gunga Govind Sing.

. . . . .

“ Permit me, my Lords, for one moment to drop my  
“ representative character here, and to speak to you  
“ as a man much conversant in the world, as a man  
“ much acquainted with men and manners in active  
“ life and amidst occupations the most various ; and,  
“ from that experience, I now profess that I never  
“ knew a man that was *bad* fit for any service that  
“ was *good*. It is not in their nature. Their minds  
“ are distorted by following the corrupt, artificial  
“ means of accomplishing their own selfish ends.  
“ Out of that track they are poor, dull, helpless,  
“ resourceless creatures. Their faculties are benumbed  
“ on that side. They are quite paralytic. There is  
“ always some disqualifying ingredient mixing with  
“ the compound and spoiling it. Their muscles have  
“ lost their very tone and character ; they cannot

“move. In short, the accomplishment of anything  
“good is a physical impossibility in such a man.  
“There is decrepitude as well as distortion. He  
“could not if he would is not more certain than that  
“he would not if he could. These men know nothing  
“but how to pursue selfish ends by bad means.  
“Therefore I say, my Lords, no one ever employed  
“a bad man but for bad ends.

“My Lords, I will do Mr. Hastings the justice to  
“say that if he had known that there was another  
“man more accomplished in iniquity than Gunga  
“Govind Sing, he would have given him the first  
“place in his confidence; but there was another  
“next to him, a person called Debi Sing. He ranked  
“under Gunga Govind Sing.

. . . . .

“His corruptions and oppressions were too  
“abominable to escape notice, and, accordingly,  
“Mr. Hastings removed this man from his em-  
“ployments, but not from his profits, which he  
“was allowed to retain. Thus stigmatised, he had  
“still the influence to procure the office of high  
“dewan, or deputy steward, to the council of Moor-  
“shedabad, the principal of the six provincial

“councils. This council consisted of young men,  
“who, like other young men of pleasurable disposi-  
“tions, and especially like young men in India, were  
“willing to reconcile if they could the means of  
“acquiring a good fortune with the effects of ruin.  
“Debi Sing took compassion upon them, and under-  
“took to lead them, at one and the same time,  
“through the paths of profit and pleasure. This  
“man possessed in an eminent degree the art of  
“pleasing those whom it was his interest to con-  
“ciliate. It was his study to provide so quick a  
“succession of pleasures, diversions, and entertain-  
“ments for the gentlemen who had seats at the  
“council board that they should not have much  
“leisure to attend to business or inquire minutely  
“into his conduct. There is, my Lords, in that  
“country a tax much more productive than honour-  
“able—a tax upon dancing girls and other females  
“who make a profession in India of contributing to  
“the pleasure of the men without any scruples on  
“the score of modesty. This tax Debi Sing farmed ;  
“and from among the ladies who were the subjects  
“of the tax he singled out, with that care and with  
“that ability for which he has been so much

“ commended, those who had the greatest personal  
“ merit. The ladies were called ‘good pearls of price,’  
“ ‘rubies of pure blood,’ and all those fine names  
“ that tended to heighten the general harmony. Debi  
“ Sing made frequent visits. He always carried this  
“ moving seraglio about with him wherever he went.  
“ With them he concerted the plans of new enter-  
“ tainments, which were executed with all the refine-  
“ ments upon pleasure that Asiatic luxury could  
“ devise. His guests were supplied liberally with the  
“ choicest music, the finest dancing, the most  
“ delicious French wines, the most costly perfumes  
“ of India; in short, with everything that could by  
“ possibility add to the luxury of such a scene. This  
“ great magician—chaste in the midst of dissoluteness,  
“ sober in the midst of drunkenness, active in the  
“ lap of drowsiness—watched the favourable moment  
“ for the accomplishment of his purposes, and con-  
“ trived, as if by accident, and not by design, to have  
“ papers of the utmost consequence brought to the  
“ gentlemen who composed the council to be signed.  
“ Young men, my Lords, who are honest themselves  
“ seldom suspect others of dishonest practices or arts;  
“ but still less so when their spirits are raised by

“ wine and the blandishments of women ; at such a  
“ moment they unsuspectingly signed whatever paper  
“ was offered for that purpose ; and thus the great  
“ ends of these expensive entertainments were fully  
“ accomplished ; and thus did this keeper of a legal  
“ brothel obtain the superintendence of a number of  
“ districts, all of which, as he had done before, he  
“ grievously oppressed and desolated, incurred large  
“ arrears of payments, and in one of these places, for  
“ his peculations, he was publicly whipped by proxy.  
“ Having thus proved himself a kind protector of the  
“ people, a prudent farmer of the revenue, and a  
“ sober guardian of the morals of youth, he was  
“ chosen by Mr. Hastings as a proper man to  
“ superintend the young rajah, to lead him in the  
“ paths of piety and virtue, and to have the whole  
“ administration of his territories, the collection of  
“ the revenues of the great countries of Dinagepore  
“ and Rumpore, committed into his hands.

“ My Lords, the consequences were such as might  
“ inevitably be expected. Debi Sing lost not a  
“ moment. One part of his instructions was that he  
“ should not raise the rents, or impose new taxes  
“ upon the inhabitants ; but such instructions did not

“ weigh much with a man who knew that if he broke  
“ through them he was sure of impunity. He there-  
“ fore resolved, by plunder and rapine of every sort,  
“ to make the most of his situation. The first thing  
“ he did was to seize on all the gentry of the country,  
“ as well as others, throw them into prison, keep  
“ them in irons, and oblige them to sign papers con-  
“ senting to an increase of their rents. The next  
“ step he took was to lay on them a number of new  
“ taxes, which, by his covenant, he was not to have  
“ laid. Being thus in prison, he obliged them to give  
“ bonds to what amount he pleased, as the price of  
“ their liberty. His next step was to seize and  
“ sequester the lands that pay no taxes. The demesne  
“ lands were accordingly put up to auction and  
“ knocked down at *one* year’s purchase, though the  
“ usual price of land in that country was *ten*. Whom  
“ were they sold to? Your Lordships will anticipate  
“ me—they were sold to Debi Sing himself through  
“ the means of one of his agents. They amounted in  
“ all to the sum of £70,000 sterling a year; but,  
“ according to the value of money in that country,  
“ they were worth £300,000 a year. These lands so  
“ sequestered were purchased so much under their

“value that the fee simple of an acre of land sold  
“for about seven or eight shillings, and the miserable  
“wretches received the payment for their lands out  
“of the money that was collected from them. The  
“money was put into a separate collection, and the  
“moment it was paid the rents were raised again,  
“and it was put by as a sacred deposit for himself,  
“or some other person whom Mr. Hastings should  
“appoint. Next was the sale of their goods. These  
“they were obliged to carry to market, and there is  
“here a circumstance that will call loudly for your  
“pity—most of the principal landholders, or zemindars, happened at that time to be women. The  
“sex, my Lords, in India, are kept in a constant  
“state of imprisonment; nevertheless, from the  
“sanctity in which they are held, they are guarded  
“with all possible attention and respect. No hand  
“of the law can touch them; but they have a custom  
“of sending family bailiffs and family serjeants into  
“their houses; and accordingly such persons came  
“into the houses of these zemindars, and made themselves masters of them. The men and women all  
“fled. All the charity lands were sold at the same  
“market: all that the affections of their ancestors

“ had provided to maintain the poor and helpless was  
“ sold before their faces at that same market. But  
“ this, my Lords, is not all. There were things yet  
“ dearer to them—the poor consolations of imagination at death for all the substantial miseries of life.  
“ There were lands set apart and destined for the  
“ burial-grounds of the owners. How dear these  
“ grounds are to all the people of India it is needless  
“ for me to say. But by the tyranny of Debi Sing—  
“ a tyranny more consuming than fire, more greedy  
“ than the grave—these lands were sold also. This  
“ was to them, from the nature of their education and  
“ religion, the most heartrending of all their losses.  
“ But, my Lords, this was not all. This was the  
“ manner in which all the principal gentry, all the  
“ secondary gentry, all the women, and all the  
“ minors were disposed of. What was the situation  
“ of the poor men, of the yeomen? I say their  
“ situation is ten thousand times worse—if possible—  
“ if there are degrees of utter ruin. They were  
“ driven like horned cattle into the common prison,  
“ and there they were obliged to sign, as the principal zemindars had done before; they were  
“ obliged to sign recognitions of their ruin; they

“ were let out only to their destruction. There were  
“ such an incredible variety of new taxes every day  
“ that they were obliged to sell almost all the corn of  
“ the country at once. It happening to be a year of  
“ fulness, and the markets overloaded, their crops  
“ did not sell for above one-fourth of their value, so  
“ that, being overloaded with taxes, they came to the  
“ next resource—they were obliged to sell everywhere  
“ and hurry to market all the cattle. Of cattle that  
“ were worth twenty shillings or twenty-five shillings  
“ a-piece, five were known to sell for ten shillings.  
“ The next thing that they were forced to part with  
“ was the ornaments of their women. The women of  
“ India do not decorate themselves to our mode;  
“ their decorations serve as a resource in cases of  
“ emergency. These were all forced to be brought to  
“ market along with the cattle; so that gold and  
“ silver sold for twenty per cent. under their  
“ value. Some will say, Gold and silver sold  
“ under their value! Certainly, my Lords, where  
“ there is an overloaded market and wicked pur-  
“ chasers.

“ Permit me now, my Lords, to set before you the  
“ state of the people that remain victims of this

“oppression. It is notorious that poverty generally  
“prevails among the poor ryots, or husbandmen;  
“that the poor are seldom possessed of any sub-  
“stance, except at the time they reap their harvest;  
“and this is the reason that such numbers of them  
“were swept away by famine. Their effects are only  
“a little earthenware, and their houses a handful of  
“straw, the sale of which was not worth a few  
“rupees; but it is still incredible that there should  
“not be a want of purchasers. My Lords, I produce  
“this strange testimony from the person himself who  
“was concerned in racking these people, and I  
“produce it to show what a country it is. The  
“people, while they were harassed in this manner,  
“sought that dreadful resource which misery is apt  
“to fly to—they fell into the hands of usurers.  
“Usurers, my Lords, are a bad resource at any time;  
“and at that time those usurers, to the accustomed  
“hardness of that description of people, added  
“another that makes such men ten times worse—that  
“is, their own necessities. Such was the determina-  
“tion of the infernal fiend, Debi Sing, to have those  
“bonds discharged that the wretched husbandmen  
“were obliged to borrow money, not at twenty, or

“thirty, or forty, or fifty, but at *six hundred* per cent., in order to satisfy him !

“My Lords, I am here obliged to offer some apology for the horrid scenes I am about to open. Permit me to make the same apology to your lordships that was made by Mr. Patterson—a man with whose name I wish mine to be handed down to posterity. His apology is this—and it is mine—that the punishments inflicted upon the ryots of Rumpore and of Dinagepore were, in many instances, of such a nature that I would rather wish to draw a veil over them than shock your feelings by a detail. But it is necessary for the substantial ends of justice and humanity, and for the honour of government, that they should be exposed, that they should be recorded, and handed down to after ages ; let this be my apology. My Lords, when the people had been stript of everything it was in some cases suspected, and justly, that they had hid some share of the grain. Their bodies were then applied to the fiercest mode of torture, which was this : They began with winding cords about their fingers till the flesh on each hand clung and was actually incorporated. Then they

“hammered wedges of wood and iron between those  
“fingers until they crushed and maimed those poor,  
“honest, and laborious hands, which were never  
“lifted up to their mouths but with a scanty supply  
“of provision. My Lords, these acts of unparalleled  
“cruelty began with the poor ryots; but if they  
“began there, there they did not stop. The heads of  
“the villages, the leading yeomen of the country,  
“respectable for their virtues, respectable for their  
“age, were tied together, two and two, the unoffend-  
“ing and helpless, thrown across a bar, upon which  
“they were hung with their feet uppermost, and there  
“beat with bamboo canes on the soles of those feet  
“until the nails started from their toes; and then with  
“the cudgels of their blind fury these poor wretches  
“were afterwards beat about the head until the blood  
“gushed out at their mouth, nose, and ears. My  
“Lords, they did not stop here. Bamboos, wangees,  
“rattans, canes, common whips, and scourges were  
“not sufficient. They found a tree in the country  
“which bears strong and sharp thorns: not satisfied  
“with those other cruelties, they scourged them with  
“these. Not satisfied with this, but searching every-  
“thing through the deepest parts of Nature, where

“ she seems to have forgot her usual benevolence,  
“ they found a poisonous plant, a deadly caustic, that  
“ inflames the part that is bruised, and often occasions  
“ death. This they applied to those wounds. My  
“ Lords, we know that there are men (for so we are  
“ made) whom bodily pains cannot subdue. The  
“ mind of some men strengthens in proportion as the  
“ body suffers. But people who can bear up against  
“ their own tortures cannot bear up against those of  
“ their children and their friends. To add, therefore,  
“ to their sufferings, the innocent children were  
“ brought forth and cruelly scourged before the faces  
“ of their parents. They frequently bound the father  
“ and the son face to face, arm to arm, body to body,  
“ and then flogged till the skin was torn from the  
“ flesh; and thus they had the devilish satisfaction of  
“ knowing that every blow must wound the body or  
“ the mind; for if one escaped the son, his sensibility  
“ was wounded by the knowledge he had that the  
“ blow had fallen upon his father; the same torture  
“ was felt by the father when he knew that every blow  
“ that missed him had fallen upon his unfortunate son.

“ My Lords, this was not—this was not all! The  
“ treatment of the females cannot be described.

“Virgins that were kept from the sight of the sun  
“were dragged into the public court—that court  
“which was intended to be a refuge against all  
“oppression—and there, in the presence of day, their  
“delicacies were offended and their persons cruelly  
“violated by the basest of mankind. It did not end  
“there; the wives of the men of the country only  
“suffered less by this: they lost their honour in the  
“bottom of the most cruel dungeons in which they  
“were confined. They were then dragged out naked,  
“and in that situation exposed to public view, and  
“scourged before all the people. My Lords, here is  
“my authority—for otherwise you will not believe it  
“possible. My Lords, what will you feel when I tell  
“you that they put the nipples of the women into  
“the cleft notches of sharp bamboos and tore them  
“from their bodies? What modesty in all nations  
“most carefully conceals these monsters revealed to  
“view and consumed by burning tortures and cruel  
“slow fires! My Lords, I am ashamed to open it—  
“horrid to tell! These infernal fiends, these mon-  
“strous tools of this monster, Debi Sing, in defiance  
“of everything divine or human, planted death in the  
“source of life!”

(Here Burke dropped his head upon his hands, unable to continue, so greatly was he oppressed by his appalling narration. The effect on the vast audience was profound. Composed in the main of a class not given to outward displays of feeling, it was, nevertheless, convulsed with intense emotion. Exclamations of horror arose on every side; several ladies fainted; and it was some little time before Burke could proceed.)

The following is the peroration with which Burke concluded his opening speech on the sixth day :—

“ I charge Mr. Hastings—and we shall charge him—  
“ with having destroyed the whole system of govern-  
“ ment, which he had no right to destroy, in the six  
“ provincial councils. I charge him with having  
“ delegated away that power which the Act of Parlia-  
“ ment had directed him to preserve unalienably in  
“ himself. I charge him with having formed an  
“ ostensible committee to be instruments and tools  
“ at the enormous expense of £62,000 a year. I  
“ charge him with having appointed a person dewan  
“ to whom those tools were to be subservient—a man  
“ whose name, to his own knowledge, by his own

“ general recorded official transactions, by everything  
“ that can make a man known, abhorred, and detested,  
“ was stamped with infamy ; with giving him this  
“ whole power, which he had thus separated from the  
“ council-general and from the provincial councils.  
“ I charge him with taking bribes of Gunga Govind  
“ Sing. I charge him that he has not done that  
“ bribe-duty with fidelity ; for there is something like  
“ a fidelity in the transactions of the very worst of  
“ men. I charge him with having robbed those  
“ people of whom he took the bribes. I charge him  
“ with having alienated the fortunes of widows. I  
“ charge him with having, without right, title, or  
“ purchase, taken away the lands of orphans, and  
“ given them to the very person under whose protec-  
“ tion those orphans were. I charge him with giving  
“ those very semindaries to the most wicked of  
“ persons, knowing his wickedness ; with having com-  
“ mitted to him that great country, and with having  
“ wasted the country, destroyed the landed interest,  
“ cruelly harassed the peasants, burnt their houses,  
“ and destroyed their crops. I charge him with  
“ having tortured and dishonoured their persons, and  
“ destroyed the honour of the whole female race of

“ that country. This I charge upon him in the name  
“ of the Commons of England.

“ Now, my Lords, what is it in this last moment  
“ that we want besides the cause of justice—the cause  
“ of oppressed princes, of undone women of the  
“ first rank, of desolated provinces, and of wasted  
“ kingdoms? Do you want a criminal, my Lords?  
“ When was there so much iniquity applied to any-  
“ one? No, my Lords, with respect to India, you  
“ must not look to punish in India more; for Mr.  
“ Hastings has not left substance enough in Asia to  
“ punish such another delinquent. My Lords, if a  
“ prosecutor you want, the Commons of Great Britain  
“ appear to prosecute. You have before you the  
“ Commons of Great Britain as prosecutors; and I  
“ believe, my Lords, I may venture to say that the  
“ sun in his beneficent progress does not behold a  
“ more glorious sight than to see those that are  
“ separated by the material bounds and barriers of  
“ nature united by the bond of social and natural  
“ humanity; and all the Commons of England resent-  
“ ing as their own the indignities and cruelties that  
“ have been offered to the people of India. My Lords,  
“ permit me to add, neither do we want a tribunal;

“ for a greater tribunal than the present no example  
“ of antiquity nor anything in the world can supply.  
“ My Lords, here we see, virtually in the mind’s eye,  
“ the sacred minister of the Crown, under whose  
“ authority you sit, and whose power you exercise.  
“ In that invisible authority, which we all feel the  
“ energy and life of, we see the protecting power of  
“ his Majesty. We have also, my Lords, sitting in  
“ judgment in this great and august assembly, the Heir  
“ Apparent to the Crown, such as the fond wishes of  
“ the people of England desire an heir apparent to  
“ be. We have here all the nobles of England,  
“ offering themselves as a pledge for the support of  
“ the rights of the Crown and the liberties of the  
“ people. We have here, my Lords, a great hereditary  
“ peerage; we have those who have their own honour,  
“ the honour of their ancestors, and the honour of  
“ their posterity to guard; and who, while they  
“ inherit the virtues of those ancestors, will be  
“ anxious to transmit them to that posterity. My  
“ Lords, we have also here a new nobility, who have  
“ raised themselves by their integrity, their virtue,  
“ and their magnanimity, and those who by their  
“ various talents and abilities have been exalted to a

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“situation, by the wisdom and bounty of their  
“sovereign, which they well deserve, and which may  
“justify that favour, and secure to them the good  
“opinion of their fellow subjects. These will be  
“equally careful not to sully those honours. My  
“Lords, we have here persons highly exalted in the  
“practice of the law, who come to sit in this tribunal,  
“to enlighten it, and to strengthen and promote those  
“principles which they have maintained in their  
“respective courts below. These being ennobled for  
“their superior knowledge will, no doubt, see that  
“the law is justly and impartially administered. My  
“Lords, you have here also the lights of our holy  
“religion, the bishops of our Church. Here we  
“behold the true image of the most incorrupted  
“religion, in its primitive and ancient forms; here  
“you behold it in its primitive ordinances, purified  
“from the superstitions that are but too apt to  
“disgrace the best institutions in the world. You  
“have here the representatives of that religion which  
“says that God is a God of love, that of their insti-  
“tutions the very vital spirit is charity, and that it  
“so much hates oppression that, when the God whom  
“we adore appeared in human form, he did not

“ appear in greatness of majesty, but in sympathy to  
“ the lower people, and made it a firm principle that  
“ in that government which he who is master of  
“ nature and who appeared in our humble form has  
“ established, of the flock that feed and those that  
“ feed them, he who is called first among them, is  
“ and ought to be the servant of the rest.

“ My Lords, these are our securities : we rest upon  
“ them ; we reckon upon them ; and we commit, with  
“ confidence, the interests of India and of humanity  
“ to your hands. Therefore it is that, ordered by the  
“ House of Commons of Great Britain, I impeach  
“ Warren Hastings of high crimes and mis-  
“ demeanours.

“ I impeach him in the name of the Commons of  
“ Great Britain in Parliament assembled, whose  
“ parliamentary trust he has abused.

“ I impeach him in the name of the Commons of  
“ Great Britain, whose national character he has dis-  
“ honoured.

“ I impeach him in the name of the People of  
“ India, whose laws, rights, and liberties he has  
“ subverted.

“ I impeach him in the name of the People of

“India, whose properties he has destroyed, whose  
“country he has laid waste and desolate.

“I impeach him in the name of human nature  
“itself, which he has cruelly outraged, injured, and  
“oppressed in both sexes. And I impeach him in  
“the name, and by the virtue of, those eternal laws  
“of justice which ought equally to pervade every age,  
“condition, rank, and situation in the world.”

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

THE foundation of Burke's political edifice was Justice. There were two buttresses to that edifice which supported and gave it strength—Liberty and Order. Indeed, without Liberty and Order there could be no enduring Justice. In his “Reflections on the Revolution in France” he says: “Men have a right to the fruits of their industry, to the means of making their industry fruitful.....Whatever each man can separately do, without trespassing on others, he has a right to do for himself; and he has a right to a fair portion of all that Society, with all its combinations of skill and force, can do in his favour. In this partnership all men have equal rights, but not to equal things. He that has but five shillings in the partnership has as good a right to it as he that has five hundred pounds has to his larger proportion.” In saying this he implicitly condemns both autocracy (which places all individual

rights of life, liberty, and property at the mercy of one irresponsible overlord) and democracy (which subjects them to the still greater irresponsibility of the mob). Speaking at Bristol, in 1774, he said :  
“ The liberty—the only liberty I mean—is a liberty  
“ connected with order and virtue, and which cannot  
“ exist at all without them.”

In considering, therefore, Burke's attitude on the French Revolution, we must keep in view these three fundamental principles of his life. The year previous to the delivery of the speech we have just referred to he had paid a visit to France, and had come away with gloomy forebodings as to the future of French society. On July 14th, 1789, the Bastille was captured by the Paris mob, and three weeks later, in a letter to Lord Charlemont, he expressed his abhorrence of such disorderly and lawless outbreaks, remarking that, if they were due to character rather than to accident, then the French people “ were not fit  
“ for liberty, and must have a strong hand, like that of  
“ their former masters, to coerce them.” While Fox, Sheridan, and the other Whig leaders acclaimed the uprising with enthusiasm, Burke proceeded to write that most famous of all his works, “ Reflections on

“ the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings in  
“ Certain Societies in London relative to that Event,”  
which, published in November, 1790, took the world  
by storm, and sold to the then unprecedented number  
of 30,000 copies within a few months of its appear-  
ance. Its contents threw his former associates into  
rage and consternation. Taunts of inconsistency and  
treason to the principles of a lifetime were hurled at  
him; but the succeeding generations have acquitted  
Burke of these charges, for they have seen that he  
was but acting on his three great leading principles of  
Justice, Liberty, and Order in opposing the violence  
of the Jacobin mob, as he had been when defending  
the American Colonists and the Peoples of India.  
The “ Reflections ” was followed by “ An Appeal  
“ from the New to the Old Whigs,” in which he replied  
to the attacks of his former political associates, and  
by many speeches in Parliament on the same subject,  
during one of which occurred the famous rupture  
between Burke and Fox, by which their long friend-  
ship came to an end. The “ Reflections ” is couched  
in the form of “ a letter intended to have been sent to  
“ a gentleman in Paris,” and consists of a refutation of  
three propositions advanced by a dissenting minister

of the day, the Rev. Dr. Richard Price, in a sermon entitled "Discourse on the Love of our Country," preached in a chapel in the Old Jewry. The preacher's thesis was that by the Revolution of 1688 the people of England acquired three fundamental rights, namely:—

- ① To choose our own governors.
- ② To cashier them for misconduct.
- ③ To frame a government for ourselves.

This thesis Burke refutes by references to the declarations of the Whigs who made the Revolution of 1688, and to the solicitude with which they preserved, as far as possible, the continuity of the royal succession. The first portion of the treatise is devoted to this subject; the second to the consideration of the Revolution in France, its inception, its progress, and its probable future developments. We give extracts which will, we think, place before the reader a clear conception of Burke's method and argument. It will be seen that his forecast of the course of the Revolution was nothing short of prophetic.

With regard to the first part of his subject, that in which he refutes Dr. Price's three propositions, he deals with it as follows:—

“ Unquestionably there was at the Revolution, in  
“ the person of King William, a small and a temporary  
“ deviation from the strict order of a regular heredi-  
“ tary succession; but it is against all genuine  
“ principles of jurisprudence to draw a principle from  
“ a law made in a special case and regarding an  
“ individual person. *Privilegium non transit in*  
“ *exemplum.* If ever there was a time favourable for ✓  
“ establishing the principle that a king of popular  
“ choice was the only legal king, without all doubt it  
“ was at the Revolution. Its not being done at that  
“ time is a proof that the nation was of opinion it  
“ ought not to be done at any time. There is no  
“ person so completely ignorant of our history as not  
“ to know that the majority in Parliament of both  
“ parties were so little disposed to anything resembling  
“ that principle that at first they were determined to  
“ place the vacant crown, not on the head of the  
“ Prince of Orange, but on that of his wife Mary,  
“ daughter of King James, the eldest born of the  
“ issue of that king, which they acknowledged as  
“ undoubtedly his. It would be to repeat a very trite  
“ story to recall to your memory all those circum-  
“ stances which demonstrated that their accepting

“ King William was not properly a *choice* ; but to  
“ all those who did not wish, in effect, to recall King  
“ James or to deluge their country in blood, and  
“ again to bring their religion, laws, and liberties  
“ into the peril they had just escaped, it was an act of  
“ *necessity*, in the strictest moral sense in which  
“ necessity can be taken.

“ In the very Act in which for a time, and in a  
“ single case, Parliament departed from the strict  
“ order of inheritance, in favour of a prince who,  
“ though not next, was, however, very near in the line  
“ of succession, it is curious to observe how Lord  
“ Somers, who drew the bill called the Declaration of  
“ Right, has comported himself on that delicate occa-  
“ sion. It is curious to observe with what address  
“ this temporary solution of continuity is kept from  
“ the eye ; whilst all that could be found in this act  
“ of necessity to countenance the idea of an hereditary  
“ succession is brought forward and fostered and  
“ made the most of by this great man and by the  
“ legislature who followed him. Quitting the dry,  
“ imperative style of an Act of Parliament, he makes  
“ the Lords and Commons fall to a pious, legislative  
“ ejaculation, and declare that they consider it ‘ as a

“ ‘marvellous providence and merciful goodness of  
“ ‘God to this nation to preserve their said majesties’  
“ ‘*royal* persons most happily to reign over us *on the*  
“ ‘*throne of their ancestors*, for which, from the  
“ ‘bottom of their hearts, they return their humblest  
“ ‘thanks and praises.’

. . . . .

“ The two Houses, in the Act of King William, did  
“ not thank God that they had found a fair oppor-  
“ tunity to assert a right to choose their own  
“ Governors, much less to make an election the *only*  
“ *lawful* title to the Crown. Their having been in  
“ condition to avoid the very appearance of it, as  
“ much as possible, was by them considered as a  
“ providential escape. They threw a politic, well-  
“ wrought veil over every circumstance tending to  
“ weaken the rights which, in the meliorated order of  
“ succession, they meant to perpetuate; or which  
“ might furnish a precedent for any future departure  
“ from what they had then settled for ever. Accord-  
“ ingly, that they might not relax the nerves of their  
“ monarchy, and that they might preserve a close  
“ conformity to the practice of their ancestors, as it

“ appeared in the declaratory statutes of Queen Mary  
“ and Queen Elizabeth, in the next clause they vest,  
“ by recognition, in their majesties, *all* the legal pre-  
“ rogatives of the Crown, declaring: ‘ That in them  
“ ‘ they are most *fully*, rightfully, and *entirely*  
“ ‘ invested, incorporated, united, and annexed.’ In  
“ the clause which follows, for preventing questions,  
“ by reason of any pretended titles to the Crown,  
“ they declare (observing also in this the traditionary  
“ language, along with the traditionary policy of the  
“ nation, and repeating as from a rubric the language  
“ of the preceding acts of Elizabeth and James) that  
“ on the preserving ‘ *a certainty* in the succession  
“ ‘ thereof, the unity, peace, and tranquillity of this  
“ ‘ nation doth, under God, wholly depend.’

“ They knew that a doubtful title of succession  
“ would but too much resemble an election, and that  
“ an election would be utterly destructive of the  
“ ‘ unity, peace, and tranquillity of this nation,’ which  
“ they thought to be considerations of some moment.  
“ To provide for these objects, and therefore to  
“ exclude for ever the Old Jewry doctrine of ‘ a right  
“ ‘ to choose our own governors,’ they follow with a  
“ clause, containing a most solemn pledge, taken from

“ the preceding Act of Queen Elizabeth, as solemn a  
“ pledge as ever was or can be given in favour of an  
“ hereditary succession, and as solemn a renunciation  
“ as could be made of the principles by this society  
“ imputed to them. ‘ The Lords spiritual and tem-  
“ poral, and Commons, do, in the name of all the  
“ people aforesaid, most humbly and faithfully  
“ submit *themselves, their heirs, and posterities for*  
“ *ever*; and do faithfully promise that they will stand  
“ to, maintain, and defend their said majesties, and  
“ also the *limitation of the Crown*, herein specified  
“ and contained, to the utmost of their powers,’ etc.

“ So far is it from being true that we acquired a ✓  
“ right by the Revolution to elect our kings—that, if  
“ we had possessed it before, the English nation did  
“ at that time most solemnly renounce and abdicate  
“ it for themselves and for all their posterity for ever.  
“ These gentlemen may value themselves as much as  
“ they please on their Whig principles; but I never  
“ desire to be thought a better Whig than Lord  
“ Somers, or to understand the principles of the  
“ Revolution better than those by whom it was brought  
“ about, or to read in the declaration of right any  
“ mysteries unknown to those whose penetrating style

“ has engraved in our ordinances, and in our hearts,  
 “ the words and spirit of that immortal law.

. . . . .

“ The second claim of the revolution society is ‘ a  
 “ ‘ right of cashiering their governors for *misconduct*.’  
 “ Perhaps the apprehensions our ancestors enter-  
 “ tained of forming such a precedent as that ‘ of  
 “ ‘ cashiering for misconduct,’ was the cause that the  
 “ declaration of the Act which implied the abdication  
 “ of King James was, if it had any fault, rather too  
 “ guarded, and too circumstantial. But all this guard  
 “ and all this accumulation of circumstances serve to  
 “ show the spirit of caution which predominated in  
 “ the national councils in a situation in which men,  
 “ irritated by oppression and elevated by a triumph  
 “ over it, are apt to abandon themselves to violent  
 “ and extreme courses; it shows the anxiety of the  
 “ great men who influenced the conduct of affairs at  
 “ that great event to make the Revolution a parent of  
 “ settlement and not a nursery of future revolutions.

“ No Government could stand a moment if it could  
 “ be blown down with anything so loose and indefinite  
 “ as an opinion of ‘ *misconduct*.’ They who led at  
 “ the Revolution grounded their virtual abdication of

“ King James upon no such light and uncertain prin-  
“ ciple. They charged him with nothing less than a  
“ design, confirmed by a multitude of illegal overt  
“ acts, to *subvert the Protestant Church and State* and  
“ their *fundamental*, unquestionable laws and liberties :  
“ they charged him with having broken the *original*  
“ *contract* between king and people. This was more  
“ than *misconduct*. A grave and overruling necessity  
“ obliged them to take the step they took, and took  
“ with infinite reluctance, as under that most rigorous  
“ of all laws. Their trust for the future preservation  
“ of the constitution was not in future revolutions.  
“ The grand policy of all their regulations was to  
“ render it almost impracticable for any future  
“ sovereign to compel the states of the kingdom to  
“ have again recourse to those violent remedies.  
“ They left the Crown what, in the eye and estima-  
“ tion of law, it had ever been, perfectly irresponsible.  
“ In order to lighten the Crown still further, they  
“ aggravated responsibility on ministers of State.....  
“ They secured soon after the *frequent meetings of*  
“ *Parliament*, by which the whole Government would  
“ be under the constant inspection and active control  
“ of the popular representatives and of the magnates

“ of the kingdom. In the next great Constitutional  
“ Act, that of the 12th and 13th of King William, for  
“ the further limitation of the Crown, and *better*  
“ securing the rights and liberties of the subject,  
“ they provided ‘ that no pardon under the great seal  
“ ‘ of England should be pleadable to an impeach-  
“ ‘ ment by the Commons in Parliament.’ The rule  
“ laid down for Government in the Declaration of  
“ Right, the constant inspection of Parliament, the  
“ practical claim of impeachment, they thought  
“ infinitely a better security not only for their con-  
“ stitutional liberty, but against the vices of adminis-  
“ tration, than the reservation of a right so difficult  
“ in the practice, so uncertain in the issue, and often  
“ so mischievous in the consequences, as that of  
“ cashiering their governors.

. . . . .

“ The third head of right, asserted by the pulpit  
“ of the Old Jewry—namely, the ‘ right to form a  
“ ‘ Government for ourselves,’ has, at least, as little  
“ countenance from anything done at the Revolution,  
“ either in precedent or principle, as the first two of  
“ their claims. The Revolution was made to preserve

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“ our *ancient* indisputable laws and liberties, and that  
“ *ancient* Constitution of Government which is our  
“ only security for law and liberty. If you are  
“ desirous of knowing the spirit of our constitution,  
“ and the policy which predominated in that great  
“ period which has secured it to this hour, pray look  
“ for both in our histories, in our records, in our  
“ Acts of Parliament, and journals of Parliament,  
“ and not in the sermons of the Old Jewry and the  
“ after-dinner toasts of the Revolution Society. In  
“ the former you will find other ideas and another  
“ language. Such a claim is as ill-suited to our  
“ temper and wishes as it is unsupported by any  
“ appearance of authority. The very idea of the  
“ fabrication of a new Government is enough to fill  
“ us with disgust and horror. We wished at the period  
“ of the Revolution, and do now wish, to derive all we  
“ possess as *an inheritance from our forefathers*. Upon  
“ that body and stock of inheritance we have taken  
“ care not to inoculate any scion alien to the nature  
“ of the original plant. All the reformatations we have  
“ hitherto made have proceeded upon the principle of  
“ reference to antiquity ; and I hope, nay, I am per-  
“ suaded, that all those which possibly may be made

“ hereafter will be carefully formed upon analogical  
 “ precedent, authority, and example.

. . . . .

“ From Magna Charta to the Declaration of Right  
 “ it has been the uniform policy of our Constitution  
 “ to claim and assert our liberties as an *entailed*  
 “ *inheritance* derived to us from our forefathers, and  
 “ to be transmitted to our posterity ; as an estate  
 “ specially belonging to the people of this kingdom,  
 “ without any reference whatever to any other more  
 “ general or prior right. By this means our Consti-  
 “ tution preserves an unity in so great a diversity of  
 “ its parts. We have an inheritable Crown, an  
 “ inheritable Peerage, and a House of Commons, and  
 “ a People inheriting privileges, franchises, and  
 “ liberties from a long line of ancestors.

✓ “ This policy appears to me to be the result of  
 “ profound reflection, or, rather, the happy effect of  
 “ following nature, which is wisdom without reflec-  
 “ tion, and above it. A spirit of innovation is  
 “ generally the result of a selfish temper and confined  
 “ views. People will not look forward to posterity  
 “ who never look backward to their ancestors.  
 “ Besides, the people of England well know that the

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“idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of  
“conservation and a sure principle of transmission,  
“without at all excluding a principle of improve-  
“ment. It leaves acquisition free; but it secures  
“what it acquires. Whatever advantages are obtained  
“by a State proceeding on these maxims are locked  
“fast as in a sort of family settlement; grasped as in  
“a kind of mortmain for ever. By a constitutional  
“policy, working after the pattern of nature, we  
“receive, we hold, we transmit our government and  
“our privileges in the same manner in which we  
“enjoy and transmit our property and our lives.  
“The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the  
“gifts of Providence, are handed down to us and  
“from us in the same course and order. Our  
“political system is placed in a just correspondence  
“and symmetry with the order of the world, and with  
“the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body  
“composed of transitory parts, wherein, by the dis-  
“position of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together  
“the great mysterious incorporation of the human  
“race, the whole at one time is never old or middle-  
“aged, or young, but in a condition of unchangeable  
“constancy, moves on through the varied tenour of

“perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression.  
“Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the  
“conduct of the State, in what we improve we are  
“never wholly new; in what we retain we are  
“never wholly obsolete. By adhering in this manner  
“and on those principles to our forefathers, we are  
“guided not by the superstition of antiquarians, but  
“by the spirit of philosophic analogy. In this choice  
“of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity  
“the image of a relation in blood, binding up  
“the Constitution of our country with our dearest  
“domestic ties; adopting our fundamental laws into  
“the bosom of our family affections; keeping in-  
“separable, and cherishing with the warmth of all  
“their combined and mutually reflected charities, our  
“State, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars.

“Through the same plan of a conformity to nature  
“in our artificial institutions, and by calling in the  
“aid of her unerring and powerful instincts to fortify  
“the fallible and feeble contrivances of our reason,  
“we have derived several other, and those no small,  
“benefits from considering our liberties in the light  
“of an inheritance. Always acting as if in the  
“presence of canonised forefathers, the spirit of

“freedom, leading in itself to misrule and excess,  
“is tempered with an awful gravity. This idea of a  
“liberal descent inspires us with a sense of habitual  
“native dignity, which prevents that upstart insolence  
“almost inevitably adhering to and disgracing those  
“who are the first acquirers of any distinction. By  
“this means our liberty becomes a noble freedom.  
“It carries an imposing and majestic aspect. It has  
“a pedigree and illustrating ancestors. It has its  
“bearings and its ensigns armorial. It has its  
“gallery of portraits, its monumental inscriptions, its  
“records, evidences, and titles. We procure rever-  
“ence to our civil institutions on the principle upon  
“which nature teaches us to revere individual men  
“on account of their age, and on account of those  
“from whom they are descended. All your sophisters  
“cannot produce anything better adapted to preserve  
“a rational and manly freedom than the course that  
“we have pursued, who have chosen our nature  
“rather than our speculations, our breasts rather  
“than our inventions, for the great conservatories  
“and magazines of our rights and privileges.”

. . . . .

In the second part of the “Reflections” he draws

✓ a masterly contrast between the caution and cold deliberation with which the great English Revolution of 1688 was carried out, and the frenzy and fury which characterised that of France in 1789. In the following passage he points out the fundamental difference between the latter event and all other political movements previously recorded in history:—

“ There have been many internal revolutions in  
“ the government of countries, both as to persons and  
“ forms, in which the neighbouring States have had  
“ little or no concern. Whatever the government  
“ might be, with respect to those persons and those  
“ forms, the stationary interests of the nation concerned have most commonly influenced the new  
“ governments in the same manner in which they  
“ influenced the old, and the revolution, turning on  
“ matter of local grievance or of local accommodation,  
“ did not extend beyond its territory.

“ The present revolution in France seems to me to  
“ be of quite another character and description, and  
“ to bear little resemblance or analogy to any of those  
“ which have been brought about in Europe, upon  
“ principles merely political. *It is a revolution of*  
✓ “ *doctrine and theoretic dogma.* It has a much greater

“resemblance to those changes which have been  
“made upon religious grounds, in which a spirit of  
“proselytism makes an essential part. -

“The last revolution of doctrine and theory which  
“has happened in Europe is the Reformation. It is  
“not for my purpose to take any notice here of the  
“merits of that revolution, but to state one only of  
“its effects.

“That effect was to introduce other interests into  
“all countries than those which arose from their  
“locality and natural circumstances.....

“These principles of internal as well as external  
“division and coalition are but just now extinguished.  
“But they who will examine into the true character  
“and genius of some late events must be satisfied  
“that other sources of faction, combining parties  
“among the inhabitants of different countries into  
“one connection, are opened, and that from those  
“sources are likely to arise effects fully as important  
“as those which had formerly arisen from the jarring  
“interests of the religious sects.

“The political dogma which, upon the new French  
“system, is to unite the factions of different nations  
“is this: ‘That the majority, told by the head, of

“ ‘ the taxable people in every country is the perpetual,  
“ ‘ natural, unceasing, indefeasible sovereign; that  
“ ‘ this majority is perfectly master of the form, as  
“ ‘ well as the administration, of the State, and that  
“ ‘ the magistrates, under whatever names they are  
“ ‘ called, are only functionaries to obey the orders  
“ ‘ (general as laws, or particular as decrees) which  
“ ‘ that majority may make; that this is the only  
“ ‘ natural Government; that all others are tyranny  
“ ‘ and usurpation.’ ”

He thus criticises the new French doctrine of social equality and the “ Rights of Man ” :—

“ The Chancellor of France at the opening of the  
“ States General said, in a tone of oratorical flourish,  
“ that all occupations were honourable. If he meant  
“ only that no honest employment was disgraceful,  
“ he would not have gone beyond the truth. But in  
“ asserting that anything is honourable we imply  
“ some distinction in its favour. The occupation of a  
“ hairdresser or of a working tallow-chandler cannot  
“ be a matter of honour to any person—to say nothing  
“ of a number of other more servile employments.  
“ Such descriptions of men ought not to suffer  
“ oppression from the State; but the State suffers

“oppression if such as they, either individually or  
“collectively, are permitted to rule. In this you  
“think you are combating prejudice, but you are at  
“war with nature.

“I do not, my dear Sir, conceive you to be of that  
“sophistical, captious spirit or of that uncandid  
“dulness as to require for every general observation  
“or sentiment an explicit detail of the correctives  
“and exceptions which reason will presume to be  
“included in all the general propositions which come  
“from reasonable men. You do not imagine that I  
“wish to confine power, authority, and distinction to  
“blood, and names, and titles. No, Sir. There is  
“no qualification for government but virtue and  
“wisdom, actual or presumptive. Wherever they are  
“actually found they have, in whatever state, condi-  
“tion, profession, or trade, the passport of heaven to  
“human place and honour. Woe to the country  
“which would madly and impiously reject the service  
“of the talents and virtues, civil, military, or reli-  
“gious, that are given to grace and to serve it; and  
“would condemn to obscurity everything formed to  
“diffuse lustre and glory around a State. Woe to  
“that country, too, that, passing into the opposite

"extreme, considers a low education, a mean, con-  
 "tracted view of things, a sordid, mercenary occupa-  
 "tion, as a preferable title to command. Everything  
 "ought to be open; but not indifferently to every  
 "man. No rotation, no appointment by lot, no mode  
 "of election operating in the spirit of sortition or  
 "rotation, can be generally good in a government  
 "conversant in extensive objects. Because they  
 "have no tendency, direct or indirect, to select the  
 "man with a view to the duty, or to accommodate  
 "the one to the other. I do not hesitate to say that  
 "the road to eminence and power from obscure  
 "condition ought not to be made too easy, nor a  
 "thing too much of course. If rare merit be the  
 "rarest of all rare things, it ought to pass through  
 "some sort of probation. The temple of honour  
 "ought to be seated on an eminence. If it be opened  
 "through virtue, let it be remembered, too, that  
 "virtue is never tried but by some difficulty and  
 "some struggle.

. . . . .

✓ "Far am I from denying in theory, full as far is  
 "my heart from withholding in practice (if I were of  
 "power to give or to withhold), the *real* rights of men.

“In denying their false claims of right, I do not mean to injure those which are real, and are such as their pretended rights would totally destroy. If civil society be made for the advantage of man, all the advantages for which it is made become his right. It is an institution of beneficence; and law itself is only beneficence acting by a rule.”

In the following passage he boldly defends “prejudice” as a necessary guide for the ordinary man:—

“In this enlightened age I am bold enough to confess that we are generally men of untaught feelings; that, instead of casting away all our old prejudices, we cherish them to a very considerable degree; and, to take more shame to ourselves, we cherish them because they *are* prejudices; and the longer they have lasted, and the more generally they have prevailed, the more we cherish them. We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason, because we suspect that the stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages. Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to

“ discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them.  
“ If they find what they seek—and they seldom fail—  
“ they think it more wise to continue the prejudice,  
“ with the reason involved, than to cast away the  
“ coat of prejudice, and to leave nothing but the  
“ naked reason ; because prejudice, with its reason,  
“ has a motive to give action to that reason, and an  
“ affection which will give it permanence. Prejudice  
“ is of ready application in the emergency ; it pre-  
“ viously engages the mind in a steady course of  
“ wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the man  
“ hesitating in the moment of decision—sceptical,  
“ puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice renders a  
“ man’s virtue his habit, and not a series of uncon-  
“ nected acts. Through just prejudice his duty  
“ becomes a part of his nature.....To avoid, therefore,  
“ the evils of inconstancy and versatility—ten thou-  
“ sand times worse than those of obstinacy and the  
“ blindest prejudice—we have consecrated the State,  
“ that no man should approach to look into its defects  
“ or corruptions but with due caution ; that he should  
“ never dream of beginning its reformation by its  
“ subversion ; that he should approach to the faults  
“ of the State as to the wounds of a father, with

“pious awe and trembling solicitude. By this wise  
“prejudice we are taught to look with horror on those  
“children of their country who are prompt rashly to  
“hack that aged parent to pieces and put him into  
“the kettle of magicians, in hopes that, by their  
“poisonous weeds and wild incantations, they may  
“regenerate the paternal constitution and renovate  
“their father’s life.”

He points out the evils of unbridled democracy as follows:— ✓

“All persons possessing any portion of power  
“ought to be strongly and awfully impressed with  
“an idea that they act in trust, and that they are to  
“account for their conduct in that trust to the one  
“great Master, Author, and Founder of society. This  
“principle ought even to be more strongly impressed  
“upon the minds of those who compose the collective  
“sovereignty than upon those of single princes.  
“Where popular authority is absolute and unre-  
“strained the people have an infinitely greater,  
“because a far better founded, confidence in their  
“own power. Besides, they are less under respon-  
“sibility to one of the greatest controlling powers on  
“earth—the sense of shame and estimation. The

“ share of infamy that is likely to fall to the lot of  
“ each individual in public acts is small indeed ; the  
“ operation of opinion being in the inverse ratio to  
“ the number of those who abuse power. Their own  
“ approbation of their own acts has to them the  
“ appearance of a public judgment in their favour. A  
“ perfect democracy is, therefore, the most shameless  
“ thing in the world. As it is the most shameless, it  
“ is also the most fearless. No man apprehends in  
“ his person he can be made subject to punishment.  
“ Certainly the people at large never ought ; for, as  
“ all punishments are for example towards the con-  
“ servation of the people at large, the people at large  
“ can never become the subject of punishment by any  
“ human hand. It is, therefore, of infinite impor-  
“ tance that they should not be suffered to imagine  
“ that their will, any more than that of kings, is the  
“ standard of right and wrong. I reprobate no form  
“ of government merely upon abstract principles.  
“ There may be situations in which the purely  
“ democratic form will become necessary. There  
“ may be some (very few and very particularly cir-  
“ cumstanced) where it would be clearly desirable.  
“ Until now we have seen no examples of considerable

“democracies. The ancients were better acquainted  
“with them, and I cannot help concurring with their  
“opinion that an absolute democracy, no more than  
“an absolute monarchy, is to be reckoned among the  
“legitimate forms of government. They think it  
“rather the corruption and degeneracy than the  
“sound constitution of a republic. Aristotle observes  
“that a democracy has many striking points of  
“resemblance with a tyranny. Of this I am certain,  
“that in a democracy the majority of the citizens is  
“capable of exercising the most cruel oppressions  
“upon the minority whenever strong divisions prevail  
“in that kind of polity, as they often must; and that  
“oppression of the minority will extend to a far  
“greater number, and will be carried on with much  
“greater fury, than can almost ever be apprehended  
“from the dominion of a single sceptre.”

In the “Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs”  
Burke maintains thus the necessity of an aristocracy  
in the constitution of a well-ordered State:—

“A true natural aristocracy is not a separate  
“interest in the State, or separable from it. It is  
“formed out of a class of legitimate presumptions,  
“which, taken as generalities, must be admitted for

“ actual truths. / To be bred in a place of estimation ;  
“ to see nothing low and sordid from one’s infancy ;  
“ to be taught to respect one’s self ; to be habituated  
“ to the censorial inspection of the public eye ; to  
“ look early to public opinion ; to stand upon such  
“ elevated ground as to be enabled to take a large  
“ view of the widespread and infinitely diversified  
“ combinations of men and affairs in a large society ;  
“ to have leisure to read, to reflect, to converse ; to be  
“ enabled to draw the court and attention of the wise  
“ and learned wherever they are to be found ; to be  
“ habituated in armies to command and to obey ;  
“ to be taught to despise danger in the pursuit of  
“ honour and duty ; to be formed to the greatest  
“ degree of vigilance, foresight, and circumspection,  
“ in a state of things in which no fault is committed  
“ with impunity, and the slightest mistakes draw on  
“ the most ruinous consequences ; to be led to a  
“ guarded and regulated conduct from a sense that  
“ you are considered as an instructor of your fellow-  
“ citizens in their highest concerns, and that you act  
“ as a reconciler between God and man ; to be  
“ employed as an administrator of law and justice,  
“ and to be thereby among the first benefactors to

"mankind; to be a professor of high science, or of  
 "liberal and ingenious art; to be among rich traders,  
 "who, from their success, are presumed to have sharp  
 "and vigorous understandings, and to possess the  
 "virtues of diligence, order, constancy, and regu-  
 "larity, and to have cultivated an habitual regard to  
 "commutative justice—these are the circumstances of  
 "men that form what I should call a natural aris-  
 "tocracy, without which there is no nation. The  
 "state of civil society, which necessarily generates  
 "this aristocracy, is a state of nature; and much  
 "more truly so than a savage and incoherent mode of  
 "life. For man is, by nature, reasonable; and he is  
 "never perfectly in his natural state but when he is  
 "placed where reason may be best cultivated and  
 "most predominates. Art is man's nature. We are  
 "as much, at least, in a state of nature in formed  
 "manhood as in immature and helpless infancy.  
 "Men, qualified in the manner I have just described,  
 "form in Nature, as she operates in the common  
 "modification of society, the leading, guiding, and  
 "governing part. It is the soul to the body, without  
 "which the man does not exist. To give, therefore,  
 "no more importance, in the social order, to such

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“descriptions of men than that of so many units is a  
“horrible usurpation.”

✓ He predicts in the following passage in the “Reflections” the inevitable fate of the French Revolutionary system to end in a military despotism :—

“They have levelled and crushed together all the  
“orders which they found, even under the coarse,  
“unartificial arrangement of the monarchy. It is  
“here, however, that every such classification, if  
“properly ordered, is good in all forms of govern-  
“ment, and composes a strong barrier against the  
“excesses of despotism, as well as it is the necessary  
“means of giving effect and permanence to a Republic.  
“For want of something of this kind, if the present  
“project of a Republic should fail, all securities to a  
“moderated freedom fail along with it; all the  
“indirect restraints which mitigate despotism are  
“removed; insomuch that if monarchy should ever  
“again obtain an entire ascendancy in France, under  
“this or any other dynasty, it will probably be, if  
“not voluntarily tempered at setting out by the wise  
“and virtuous counsels of the prince, the most com-  
“pletely arbitrary power that has ever appeared on  
“earth.”

"It is, besides, to be considered whether an  
"Assembly like yours, even supposing that it was in  
"possession of another sort of organ through which  
"its orders were to pass, is fit for promoting the  
"obedience and discipline of an army. It is known  
"that armies have hitherto yielded a very precarious  
"and uncertain obedience to any senate, or popular  
"authority. The officers must totally lose the  
"characteristic disposition of military men if they  
"see with perfect submission and due admiration the  
"dominion of lawyers.....whose military policy and  
"the genius of whose command (if they have any)  
"must be as uncertain as their duration is transient.  
"In the weakness of one kind of authority, and in  
"the fluctuation of all, the officers of an army will  
"remain for some time mutinous and full of faction,  
"until some popular general who understands the  
"art of conciliating the soldiery, and who possesses  
"the true spirit of command, shall draw the eyes of  
"all men upon himself. Armies will obey him on  
"his personal account. There is no other way of  
"securing military obedience in this state of things.  
"But the moment in which that event shall happen,  
"the person who really commands the army is your

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“ master ; the master (that is little) of your king, the  
“ master of your Assembly, the master of your whole  
“ Republic.”

## CHAPTER V.

### BURKE ON CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES

BESIDES the speeches and writings from which we have already quoted, there are many other works of Burke which contain valuable teachings, most of which are as applicable to present-day problems as they were to the questions which agitated his own times. There is, for instance, the speech which he delivered at Bristol on November 3rd, 1774, after he had been declared elected for that city, in which he expressed his views as to the position and duty of a member of Parliament, and pointed out the distinction between a representative and a mere delegate with a hard-and-fast "mandate."

The following is the passage referred to :—

"It ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him ; their opinion, high

“ respect ; their business, unremitted attention. It is  
“ his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his  
“ satisfactions, to theirs ; and, above all, ever and in  
“ all cases to prefer their interest to his own. But  
“ his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his  
“ enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to  
“ you, to any man, or to any set of men living.  
“ These he does not derive from your pleasure ; no,  
“ nor from the law and the Constitution. They are a  
“ trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is  
“ deeply answerable. Your representative owes you  
“ not his industry only, but his judgment ; and he  
“ betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to  
“ your opinion.

“ My worthy colleague says his will ought to be  
“ subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is  
“ innocent. If government were a matter of will  
“ upon any side, yours, without question, ought to be  
“ superior. But government and legislation are  
“ matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclina-  
“ tion ; and what sort of reason is that in which the  
“ determination precedes the discussion ; in which one  
“ set of men deliberate and another decide ; and where  
“ those who form the conclusion are perhaps three

“ hundred miles distant from those who hear the  
“ arguments?

“ To deliver an opinion is the right of all men ;  
“ that of constituents is a weighty and respectable  
“ opinion, which a representative ought always to  
“ rejoice to hear, and which he ought always most  
“ seriously to consider. But *authoritative* instruc-  
“ tions, *mandates* issued, which the member is bound  
“ blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue  
“ for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his  
“ judgment and conscience ; these are things utterly  
“ unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise  
“ from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and  
“ tenour of our Constitution.

“ Parliament is not a *congress* of ambassadors from  
“ different and hostile interests ; which interests each  
“ must maintain, as an agent and advocate against  
“ other agents and advocates ; but Parliament is a ✓  
“ *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation, with *one* interest,  
“ that of the whole. You choose a member, indeed ; ✓  
“ but when you have chosen him, he is not a member  
“ of Bristol, but he is a member of *Parliament*. If  
“ the local constituent should have an interest, or  
“ should form a hasty opinion, evidently opposite to

“the real good of the rest of the community, the  
“members of that place ought to be as far as any  
“other from any endeavour to give it effect.....Your  
“faithful friend, your devoted servant, I shall be to  
“the end of my life; a flatterer you do not wish for.  
“On this point of instructions, however, I think it  
“scarcely possible we ever can have any sort of  
“difference.”

Burke's support of the removal of restrictions on  
Irish trade displeased some of his constituents, who  
fancied that the interests of Bristol might suffer, and  
he explained and justified his action in a letter to  
Mr. Samuel Span, Master of the Society of Merchant  
Adventurers of Bristol, on April 23rd, 1778, of which  
the following is the concluding passage. It serves to  
bring out in still stronger relief his lofty conception  
of the duties of a legislator:—

“I have written this long letter in order to give all  
“possible satisfaction to my constituents, with regard  
“to the part I have taken in this affair. It gave me  
“inexpressible concern to find that my conduct had  
“been a cause of uneasiness to any of them. Next  
“to my honour and conscience, I have nothing so  
“near and dear to me as their approbation. However,

“I had much rather run the risk of displeasing  
“than injuring them, if I am driven to make such an  
“option. You obligingly lament that you are not to  
“have me for your advocate; but if I had been  
“capable of acting as an advocate in opposition to a  
“plan so perfectly consonant to my known principles,  
“and to the opinions I had publicly declared on a  
“hundred occasions, I should only disgrace myself,  
“without supporting, with the smallest degree of  
“credit or effect, the cause you wished me to under-  
“take. I should have lost the only thing which can  
“make such abilities as mine of any use to the world  
“now or hereafter; I mean that authority which is ✓  
“derived from an opinion that a member speaks the  
“language of truth and sincerity, and that he is not  
“ready to take up or lay down a great political  
“system for the convenience of the hour; that he is  
“in Parliament to support his opinion of the public  
“good, and does not form his opinion in order to get  
“into Parliament or to continue in it. It is in great  
“measure for your sakes that I wish to preserve this  
“character. Without it, I am sure, I should be ill  
“able to discharge, by any service, the smallest part  
“of that debt of gratitude and affection which I owe

“you for the great and honourable trust you have  
“reposed in me.”

In September, 1780, there was an appeal to the country, and Burke went down to Bristol to seek re-election. In his speech to the electors he defended himself from charges arising out of his Parliamentary / conduct, and again explained his views on the duty of a popular representative as follows:—

“When we know that the opinions of even the  
“greatest are the standard of rectitude, I shall think  
“myself obliged to make those opinions the masters  
“of my conscience. But, if it be doubted whether  
“Omnipotence itself is competent to alter the essential  
“constitution of right and wrong, sure I am that such  
“things as they and I are possessed of no such power.  
“No man carries further than I do the policy of  
“making government pleasing to the people. But  
“the widest range of this politic complaisance is con-  
“fined within the limits of justice. I would not only  
“consult the interests of the people, but I would  
“cheerfully gratify their humours. We are all a sort  
“of children that must be soothed and managed. I  
“think I am not austere or formal in my nature. I  
“would bear, I would even myself play my part in,

“any innocent buffooneries to divert them. But I  
“never will act the tyrant for their amusement. If  
“they will mix malice in their sports, I shall never  
“consent to throw them any living sentient creature  
“whatsoever—no, not so much as a kitling, to  
“torment.

“‘But if I profess all this impolitic stubbornness, I  
“‘may chance never to be elected into Parliament.’  
“It is certainly not pleasing to be put out of the  
“public service. But I wish to be a member of  
“Parliament, to have my share of doing good and  
“resisting evil. It would, therefore, be absurd to  
“renounce my objects in order to retain my seat. I  
“deceive myself, indeed, most grossly if I had not  
“much rather pass the remainder of my life hidden  
“in the recesses of the deepest obscurity, feeding my  
“mind even with the visions and imaginations of  
“such things, than to be placed on the most splendid  
“throne of the universe, tantalised with a denial of  
“the practice of all which can make the greatest  
“situation any other than the greatest curse. Gentle-  
“men, I have had my day. I can never sufficiently  
“express my gratitude to you for having set me in a  
“place wherein I could lend the slightest help to

“great and laudable designs. If I have had my  
“share in any measure giving quiet to private  
“property and private conscience; if, by my vote, I  
“have aided in securing to families the best possession  
“—peace; if I have joined in reconciling kings to  
“their subjects, and subjects to their prince; if I  
“have assisted to loosen the foreign holdings of the  
“citizen, and taught him to look for his protection to  
“the laws of his country, and for his comfort to the  
“goodwill of his countrymen; if I have taken my  
“part with the best of men in the best of their  
“actions, I can shut the book. I might wish to read  
“a page or two more, but this is enough for my  
“measure. I have not lived in vain.

“And now, gentlemen, on this serious day, when I  
“come, as it were, to make up my account with you,  
“let me take to myself some degree of honest pride  
“on the nature of the charges that are against me.  
“I do not here stand before you accused of venality,  
“or of neglect of duty. It is not said that, in the  
“long period of my service, I have, in a single  
“instance, sacrificed the slightest of your interests  
“to my ambition, or to my fortune. It is not alleged  
“that to gratify any anger or revenge of my own, or

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“of my party, I have had a share in wronging or  
“oppressing any description of men, or any one man  
“in any description. No! the charges against me ✓✓✓  
“are all of one kind—that I have pushed the prin-  
“ciples of general justice and benevolence too far,  
“further than a cautious policy would warrant, and  
“further than the opinions of many would go along  
“with me. In every accident which may happen  
“through life—in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and  
“distress, I will call to mind this accusation, and be  
“comforted.”

## CHAPTER VI.

### APHORISMS

HAVING now presented to the reader a view of Burke's teachings which we think will have fully justified our claim that he was pre-eminently the apostle of Justice and Liberty, we will conclude our excerpts with one hundred dicta and aphorisms taken at random from his speeches and writings :—

Party divisions, whether on the whole operating for good or evil, are things inseparable from free government.

It is very rare indeed for men to be wrong in their feelings concerning public misconduct ; as rare to be right in their speculation upon the cause of it.

Every age has its own manners and its politics dependent upon them, and the same attempt will not be made against a constitution fully formed and matured that was used to destroy it in the cradle, or to resist its growth during its infancy.

It was soon discovered that the forms of a free and the ends of an arbitrary government were things not altogether incompatible.

Whatever be the road to power, that is the road which will be trod.

No lines can be laid down for civil or political wisdom. But though no man can draw a stroke between the confines of day and night, yet light and darkness are upon the whole tolerably distinguishable.

War is a situation which sets in its full light the value of the hearts of a people.

The virtue, spirit, and essence of a House of Commons consists in its being the express image of the feelings of the nation.

Party is a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed.

Public life is a situation of power and energy; he trespasses against his duty who sleeps upon his watch, as well as he that goes over to the enemy.

There is no knowledge which is not valuable.

Interested timidity disgraces as much in the Cabinet as personal timidity does in the field. But timidity with regard to the well-being of our country is heroic virtue.

Great men are the guide-posts and land-marks of the State.

To tax and to please, no more than to love and to be wise, is not given to men.

An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery.

I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people.

The question with me is, not whether you have a right to

render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy.

Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom, and a great empire and little minds go ill together.

Plain, good intention, which is as easily discovered at the first view as fraud is surely detected at last, is, let me say, of no mean force in the government of mankind.

Virtue will catch, as well as vice, by contact.

The poorest being that crawls on earth, contending to save itself from injustice and oppression, is an object respectable in the eyes of God and man.

The *extreme* of liberty (which is its abstract perfection, but its real fault) obtains nowhere, nor ought to obtain anywhere.....But it ought to be the constant aim of every wise public counsel to find out.....with how little, not how much, of this restraint the community can subsist.

Nothing in progression can rest on its original plan. We may as well think of rocking a grown man in the cradle of an infant.

No sound ought to be heard in the church but the healing voice of Christian charity.....Surely the church is a place where one day's truce ought to be allowed to the dissensions and animosities of mankind.

A State without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation.

No experience has taught us that, in any other course or method than that of an *hereditary Crown*, our liberties can be regularly perpetuated and preserved sacred as our *hereditary rights*.

The Temple of Honour ought to be seated on an eminence. If it be opened through virtue, let it be remembered, too, that virtue is never tried but by some difficulty and some struggle.

Government is not made in virtue of natural rights, which may and do exist in total independence of it.....Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants.

Almost all the high-bred republicans of my time have, after a short space, become the most decided, thorough-paced courtiers.

There ought to be a system of manners in every nation which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely.

Kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle.

Criminal means, once tolerated, are soon preferred. They present a shorter cut to the object than through the highway of the moral virtues.

Conduct—the only language that rarely lies.

“Too much” and “too little” are treason against property.

I hope we shall never be so totally lost to all sense of the duties imposed upon us by the law of social union as, upon any pretext of public service, to confiscate the goods of a single unoffending citizen.

No man can mortgage his injustice as a pawn for his fidelity.

If we do not take to our aid the foregone studies of men reputed intelligent and learned, we shall be always beginners.

Lawful enjoyment is the surest method to prevent unlawful gratification.

There is a courageous wisdom; there is also a false, reptile prudence—the result, not of caution, but of fear.

A great State is too much envied, too much dreaded, to find safety in humiliation. To be secure, it must be respected. Power and eminence and consideration are things not to be begged. They must be commanded.

If we command our wealth, we shall be rich and free; if our wealth command us, we are poor indeed. We are bought by the enemy with the treasure from our own coffers.

Often has a man lost his all because he would not submit to hazard all in defending it.

A peace too eagerly sought is not always the sooner obtained.

Men are not tied to one another by papers and seals. They are led to associate by resemblances, by conformities, by sympathies.

As to war, if it be the means of wrong and violence, it is the sole means of justice among nations. Nothing can banish it from the world. They who say otherwise, intending to impose upon us, do not even impose upon themselves.

Our legislature has been ever closely connected with individual feeling and individual interest. Personal liberty in England has been a direct object of government.

Virtues have their place, and out of their place they hardly deserve the name. They pass into the neighbouring vice.

A brave people will certainly prefer liberty, accompanied with a virtuous poverty, to a depraved and wealthy servitude.....I shall always, however, consider that liberty is very equivocal in her appearance which has not wisdom and justice for her companions, and does not lead prosperity and plenty in her train.

Nobility is a graceful ornament to the civil order. It is the Corinthian capital of polished society.

It is a sour, malignant, envious disposition, without taste for the reality, or for any image or representation of virtue, that sees with joy the unmerited fall of what had long flourished in splendour and in honour.

It is not with much credulity I listen to any when they speak evil of those whom they are going to plunder. An enemy is a bad witness; a robber is a worse.

In history a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from the past errors and infirmities of mankind.

It is in the *principle* of injustice that the danger lies, and not in the description of persons on whom it is first exercised.

If prescription be once shaken, no species of property is secure.

The great source of my solicitude is lest it should ever be considered in England as the policy of a State to seek a resource in confiscations of any kind, or that any one description of citizens should be brought to regard any of the others as their proper prey.

Justice is itself the great standing policy of civil society, and any eminent departure from it, under any circumstances, lies under the suspicion of being no policy at all.

A disposition to preserve, and an ability to improve taken together, would be my standard of a statesman.

Superstition is the religion of feeble minds.

Eloquence may exist without a proportionable degree of wisdom.

Difficulty is a severe instructor, set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental Guardian and Legislator, who knows us better than we know ourselves, as he loves us better, too.

He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper.

Rage and frenzy will pull down more in half an hour than prudence, deliberation, and foresight can build up in a hundred years.

If circumspection and caution are a part of wisdom when we work only upon inanimate matter, surely they become a part of duty, too, when the subject of our demolition and construction is not brick and timber, but sentient beings, by the sudden alteration of whose state, condition, and habits multitudes may be rendered miserable.

In my course I have known—and, according to my measure, have co-operated with—great men; and I have never yet seen any plan which has not been mended by the observations of those who were much inferior in understanding to the person who took the lead in the business.

Those who are habitually employed in finding and displaying faults are unqualified for the work of reformation, because their minds are not only unfurnished with patterns of the fair and good, but by habit they come to take no delight in the contemplation of those things. By hating vices too much, they come to love men too little.

The revenue of the State *is* the State. In effect all depends upon it, whether for support or for reformation.

Let us only suffer any person to tell us his story, morning and evening, but for one twelvemonth, and he will become our master.

The conduct of a losing party never appears right; at least, it never can possess the only infallible criterion of wisdom to vulgar judgments—success.

It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.

How often the desire and design of a tyrannic domination lurk in the claim of an extravagant liberty.

There is no safety for honest men but by believing all possible evil of evil men, and by acting with promptitude, decision, and steadiness in that belief.

There are cases in which a man would be ashamed not to have been imposed on. There is a confidence necessary to human intercourse, and without which men are often more injured by their own suspicions than they would be by the perfidy of others.

The credulity of dupes is as inexhaustible as the invention of knaves.

When the people have once tasted the flattery of knaves, they can no longer endure reason, which appears to them only in the form of censure and reproach.

Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites.

Men love to hear of their power, but have an extreme disrelish to be told of their duty.

There are times and circumstances in which not to speak out is at least to connive.

Indecision is the natural accomplice of violence.

A theory concerning government may become as much a cause of fanaticism as a dogma in religion.

When a man is from system furious against monarchy or episcopacy, the good conduct of the monarch or the bishop has no other effect than further to irritate the adversary. He is provoked at it, as furnishing a plea for preserving the thing which he wishes to destroy.

A constitution on sufferance is a constitution condemned. Sentence is already passed upon it. The execution is only delayed.

Provisions for security are not to be received from those who think that there is no danger.

The whole scheme of our mixed constitution is to prevent any one of its principles from being carried as far as, taken by itself, and theoretically, it would go.

Men little think how immorally they act in rashly meddling with what they do not understand.

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They who raise suspicions on the good on account of the behaviour of ill men are of the party of the latter.

A conscientious person would rather doubt his own judgment than condemn his species.

He that accuses all mankind of corruption ought to remember that he is sure to convict only one.

It is impossible that anything should be necessary to commerce which is inconsistent with justice.

Bad laws are the worst sort of tyranny.

I have no idea of a liberty unconnected with honesty and justice.

We are all a sort of children that must be soothed and managed.

What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue !

He censures God who quarrels with the imperfections of man.

The use of character is to be a shield against calumny.

Obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the composition of all true glory; calumny and abuse are essential parts of triumph.

I have known merchants with the sentiments and the abilities of great statesmen; and I have seen persons in the rank of statesmen with the conceptions and character of pedlars.

The situation of man is the preceptor of his duty.

He who calls in the aid of an equal understanding doubles his own. He who profits of a superior under-

standing raises his powers to a level with the height of the superior understanding he unites with.

The effect of liberty to individuals is that they may do what they please ; we ought to see what it will please them to do before we risk congratulations which may be soon turned into complaints.

Whenever our neighbour's house is on fire, it cannot be amiss for the engines to play a little on our own. Better to be despised for too anxious apprehensions than ruined by too confident a security.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

WE have now brought our quotations to a close, and trust that we have achieved, in part at all events, the object which we set before us at the outset. We have endeavoured, as far as possible, to let Burke speak for himself, and have refrained from comment except where absolutely necessary to elucidate the context.

The reader of these pages cannot fail to have been struck with the gulf which separates our times from the period in which Burke lived. It has become the habit to sneer at the eighteenth century as an age of shams ; of powder and patches ; of periwigs, clouded canes, and formal grimacings. Carlyle is mainly responsible for this view, which, in our humble opinion, is an utterly superficial and erroneous one. A century which produced Johnson, Adam Smith, Hume, Gibbon, Goldsmith, Fielding, Richardson, Smollett, Thomson, and Cowper ; Gainsborough, Hogarth, Morland, and Reynolds ; Watt, Arkwright, and Crompton ; Clive and Warren Hastings ; Wolfe,

Howe, Rodney, Jervis, and Nelson; Pitt, Fox, Windham, and Burke; and whose annals are illumined by the victories of Plassey, St. Vincent, and "The Glorious First of June," is not one to be dismissed with a sneer.

If society is now less brutal, is it not, on the other hand, more neurotic and less virile? The eighteenth century fox-hunting gentry of England, with all their faults, possessed many sterling virtues, which in these days are not so much in evidence as they might be. The present age lacks the dignity which characterised that of Burke. The prevailing mania is restlessness, and from this no class seems to be exempt. The sole desire of vast multitudes of people appears to be to get away, with the utmost possible speed, from any place in which they happen to find themselves at a given moment. The same rush and hurry now extends to all phases of life. A feverish desire to get money without the slow and laborious process of honest work has fostered and developed the gambling spirit among all classes, from the speculator who plunges on a large scale to the working man who has his "bit on" and is the main support of the halfpenny evening news-

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papers. Amidst all this hectic excitement few have time to think. Our boasted diffusion of knowledge is largely a sham. National "education" consists in cramming unreceptive minds with indigestible scraps of information, and tends to confuse the thinking powers rather than to develop them; while the practical knowledge formerly acquired by the young in the field, the garden, the farmyard, the workshop, and the household is becoming extinct. Farmers complain that, while it is difficult to procure a labourer who can thatch a rick, there are plenty who can mis-describe the equator as "an imaginary lion running round the "earth." As to the modern woman, the press teems with complaints of her frivolity and crass ignorance of all domestic and maternal duties.

In politics it is to be feared that, in spite of all the abuses which existed in Burke's time, the present age does not compare favourably with his. The despotism of the Caucus has destroyed the possibility of realising his ideal of a member of Parliament. More and more is the representative becoming merged in the delegate, while the House of Commons has practically ceased to be a deliberative assembly, and has become a mere registration bureau for Ministerial decrees.

On all sides, too, there is evidence of the encroachments of "the State" upon personal freedom and the rights of private property—the twin pillars which, as Burke showed, support the whole fabric of British greatness and prosperity.

The principles enunciated by Burke were those held and taught by a long succession of illustrious statesmen—of whom he was the greatest—from the Revolution of 1688 down to the latter part of the nineteenth century, when the virus of State and Municipal Socialism began to poison the political life-blood of the country.

The creed of those men was summed up in one word—Liberty. Their aim was to release the nation from the trammels with which it had been hampered owing to the restless desire of previous generations to "govern too much." Freedom—political, religious, commercial, and industrial—was the alpha and omega of their creed; and under that wise and beneficent policy our ancestors, in the words of Burke, "turned "a savage wilderness into a glorious empire."

Those who believe that the greatness of that empire can be preserved only by adherence to the principle of individual initiative and energy which

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created it, will find in Burke's pages a never-failing source of inspiration and encouragement in resisting the socialistic tendencies of the age—the deadliest and most insidious danger that has ever threatened the liberty and progress of mankind.

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